



Grace Episcopal Church

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2022

Festival of Lessons & Carols for Advent

10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Comfort, Comfort Now My People— P. Manz

INTROIT (vv. 5-6)

(Choir only)

O come, O come, Emmanuel

THE ADVENT WREATH - The Fourth Candle: The Candle of Love

The Sheets Family

The congregation remains standing

The Reader:

Last Sunday we lit the candle of joy. We light it and the candles of hope and peace again as we remember that Jesus, the child of hope, born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfill all of God's promises and bring us everlasting peace and joy.

(The first, second, and third candles are lighted.)

The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love.

God's love is a perfect love. It holds nothing back.

This is what love is like: Love is patient. Love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish. Love is not quick to take offense. Love keeps no records of wrongs. Love does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face and overcome. There is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends.

We light the candle of love to remind us that Jesus brings us God's love and shows us how to love others.

(The fourth candle is lighted.)

Let Us Pray.

The people read aloud together

Thank you God for the LOVE you give us. As we hope in your promises, and wait for Christ to come again, we ask that you would remain present with us and by your Spirit help us each day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your LOVE with one another. This we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION OF SIN & ABSOLUTION

The Rev. Ed Kelaher

The Officiant says to the people

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

Silence may be kept.

Officiant and People together, all kneeling

Most merciful God, we confess that 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 are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Priest alone stands and says

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

All stand

Officiant Lord, open our lips.

People **And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.**

PROCESSION HYMN #74

Blest be the King whose coming

THE BIDDING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

In the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this *city*.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore. And now, in the fullness of all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

The congregation may be seated and remain so during the readings and hymns.

INVITATORY HYMN (Choir only)

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

THE FIRST READING

Genesis 1:24, 26-31a

Judie Reed

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

HYMN #82 (vv. 1-2, 4)

Of the Father's love begotten

THE SECOND READING

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

Kristi Allred

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel."
And to the man he said,
'Because you have listened to the voice of your
wife,

and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
You shall not eat of it",
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your
life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken; you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."

THE THIRD READING

Isaiah 40:1-11

Marilyn Taylor

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
 that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
 that she has received from the LORD's hand
 double for all her sins. A voice cries out:
 "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
 make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
 Every valley shall be lifted up,
 and every mountain and hill be made low;
 the uneven ground shall become level,
 and the rough places a plain.
 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
 and all people shall see it together,
 for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"
 All people are grass,
 their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
 when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
 surely the people are grass.
 The grass withers, the flower fades;
 but the word of our God will stand forever.
 Get you up to a high mountain,
 O Zion, herald of good tidings;
 lift up your voice with strength,
 O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
 lift it up, do not fear;
 say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
 See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
 and his arm rules for him; his reward is with
 him, and his recompense before him.
 He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will
 gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them
 in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

HYMN #75

There's a voice in the wilderness crying

THE FOURTH READING

Luke 1:26-38

Lynn Meeks

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.

HYMN (Choir only)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

THE FIFTH READING

Luke 2:1-17

Kathy Young

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CHOIR ANTHEM

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus – J. S. Bach

Offertory will be collected during this hymn

Please stand

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

In the bleak midwinter (v.4)

4 What can I give him poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him- give my heart.

THE SIXTH READING

Luke 2:8-12

Sally Dodd

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'

HYMN #102 (vv. 1-2, 4)

Once in royal David's city

THE SEVENTH READING

Luke 2:15-20

David Thayer

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

THE EIGHTH READING

Matthew 2:1-12

Melissa Thayer

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

HYMN #98 (vv. 1 and 5 - ALL) (vv. 2-4 - Choir)

Unto us a boy is born!

THE NINTH READING

Hebrews 1:1-12

Kathie Goodman

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"?
Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."
Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire."

But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands;
they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing;
like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed.
But you are the same, and your years will never end."

Please stand.

THE ADVENT BLESSING

Celebrant May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you in holy light as you remain steadfast in faith, filled with joy, encouraged in hope, and constant in love. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you now and remain with you always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL HYMN

People, look east



1. Peo-ple, look east. The time is near of the crown-ing of the
2. Fur-rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plant-ed
3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall
4. An-gels an-nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to



year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the
there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in
brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, bright as
earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley hum - ming with the

People, look east and sing to - day:



hearth and set the ta - ble.
course the flower may flour-ish.
sun and moon to - geth - er.
word, the Lord is com-ing.

People, look east:

People, look east:



Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

People, Look East - L. Langlois

