



**Worship for Sunday, December 20, 2020 - Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church**  
**Greendale, WI [www.ssmelca.org](http://www.ssmelca.org)**

***Introduction to the day***

*God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."*

**PRELUDE - "O Come , O Come, Emmanuel" arr. Thomas Keesecker Teri Peterson, flute**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**L:** Today we relight the first two candles of the Advent wreath. The candle of **HOPE**, the **PEACE** and **JOY**. Now we light the fourth candle of Advent. This is the Candle of **LOVE**. Jesus demonstrated self-giving love in his ministry as the Good Shepherd. Advent is a time for kindness, thinking of others, and sharing with others. It is a time to love as God loved us by giving us the most precious gift. As God is love, let us be love also. From the Gospel of John we hear:

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." - John 13:34-35

Let us pray:

**C:** **Teach us to love, O Lord. May we always remember to put you first as we follow Christ's footsteps, that we may know your love and show it in our lives. As we prepare for our celebration of Jesus' birth, also fill our hearts with love for the world, that all may know your love and the one whom you have sent, your son, our Savior. Amen**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**L:** Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
whose forgiveness is sure  
and whose steadfast love endures forever.

**C:** **Amen**

**L:** Together let us honestly and humbly confess  
that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

L: Loving and forgiving God,  
C: **we confess that we are held captives by sin.  
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.  
We have not welcomed the stranger:  
we have not loved our neighbor:  
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.**

L: 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 by Christ's peace,  
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

#### **GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

C: **Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might,  
free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear  
your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the  
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**FIRST READING: Luke 1:46b-55** *(Read by: Bonnie Daleness)*

<sup>6</sup>And Mary said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

L: The word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God.**

**SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27** (Read by: Bonnie Daleness)

*Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.*

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

L: The word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.*

Music: "Alleluia 7," Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994, and the Taizé Community  
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**GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38**

P: The holy gospel according to Luke. C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.*

*Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others*

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>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. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>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. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>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.

L: The gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

**MESSAGE - "Complicated" Rev. Brian Hooper**

**HYMN OF THE DAY - "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"**



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,  
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,  
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;  
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:  
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;  
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.  
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,  
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,  
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."  
 and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."  
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!  
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,  
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924  
 Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**L:** On this fourth Sunday of Advent, let us pray that God come quickly to this weary world, responding to each petition with the words, "Come and save us soon."

*A brief silence.*

**L:** O God, Emmanuel, we pray: be with us. Bless our national church and our own congregation. Bless also our neighbors of other denominations and faiths, that strengthened by your presence we may support one another in love and together serve those in need. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

**L:** O God, the Wisdom of the world, as tomorrow the earth's north tilts back toward the sun, preserve vegetation and wild animals during winter. Form us into a people who honor your creation. Make of our decorated Christmas trees signs of our thankfulness for the earth. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

**L:** O God, King of nations, bring peace and justice to the countries of the world. Lead the nations of the Middle East toward peace with one another and justice for the Palestinians. Guide our elected leaders toward honest and compassionate policies that serve all the people. Preserve our nation from discord and violence. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

**L:** O God, Key of David, look with mercy on all who are locked into despair, who fear the darkness, who live brokenhearted. Open windows to those who are isolated. Abide with all who are incarcerated. Give shelter to the homeless and the refugees. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

**L:** O God, Root of Jesse, nurture our community. Connect us with one another across all barriers, and bring an end to historic prejudices. Bless the work of food pantries and relief

agencies, and inspire our holidays with your spirit of benevolence. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

L: O God, Ruler of might, send your healing power to all in bodily need. Curb the coronavirus, and strengthen medial workers. For those with COVID-19 we pray. Guide all world health organizations and governmental officials in the distribution of the vaccines, and clam the fears of those who are reluctant to receive the vaccine. Bring pregnant women to successful births. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

L: O God, Dayspring everlasting, we remember all who have died and now live in your light, especially Katharina von Bora Luther and those we name here before you:...Gather us to yourself, when we join with all the faithful of every time and land to sing Mary's hymn of praise. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

L: We pray for our partners in the Diocese of Meru. We rejoice as 120 your people are confirmed in the faith and as four pastors are ordained for ministry. Bless these ministries. Hear our prayer, O God:

**C: Come and save us soon.**

P: We cannot thank you enough, O Emmanuel, for your ongoing presence among us. Remain with us, and receive our prayers, for the sake of the Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**C: 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**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

**OFFERTORY** *(Thanks for sharing your gifts. Offering envelopes can still be mailed to the church, you can use the GIVE + app found on the resource tab at ssmelca.org or you may wish to sign up for Simply Giving to have your offering scheduled on an automatic basis.)*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

P: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.

C: **Amen.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BLESSING**

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,  
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,  
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,  
✠ now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

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

C: **Thanks be to God.**

**BLESSING**

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,  
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,  
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,  
✠ now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

**POSTLUDE - "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *arr. Wilbur Held***

*From sundaysandseasons.com.*

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## **KEEP THESE SSM MEMBERS IN PRAYER**

Melissa Cooper, Joyce Gagliano, Greg Guiliani, Sue Herman, Sue Jarchow, Lynda Johnson,  
Ken & Carolyn Kahl, Vic & Sandy Peterson, Teri Peterson, Patrick Rafalski, John Rech,  
Joan Retzlaff, Dean Rockstad, Rob Rutzen, Richard Sontvedt, John Winter.  
Louise Becker at the sudden passing of her daughter Janet.

## **PRAY FOR OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

Roberta Henrichs, sister-in-law of Joan Retzlaff	Dawn Salopek, sister of Karen Miller
Laurence Freemont, friend of SSM	Janet Heino, great aunt of Stephanie Falksen
Katie Stull, granddaughter of Phil & LaVerne Morgan	Tinsley Marie, great granddaughter of Sue Herman
Jane Janicki, sister of the Winter Family	Cameo Abifarin, friend of Julie Herman
Jerelie Caston, daughter of Joan Retzlaff	Cathy & Mark Kossow, friends of Lynda Johnson
Nancy & Mike Andritsch, sister/brother-in-law of Barbara & Dan Davies	Tippecanoe's "Larry under the bridge", friend of the Homeless
Josh Knapp, friend of Amy Billman	Katie Manzeck, friend of Carol Manning
Linda Radike, friend of Julie Herman	Susan White, sister of Sally Kowalewski
Karen Stolz, neighbor of Julie Herman	Jon Kowalewski, husband of Susan Kowalewski
Roger & Kathy Blanchard, cousin of Bob Lieske	Lauryn Ramintho, great-granddaughter of Karen Miller
Billy Waters, husband of Darlene Waters & Stepdad of Lori Salas	Lucy Copeland, granddaughter of Dianne Niese
Daniel Kilimann, son of Joy Kilimann	Liane Guthrie, daughter of Dianne Niese
Carson Wudtke, grandson of Dan & Barb Davies	Leroy Robinson, father of Linda Schmidt
Sharon West, friend of Lynda Johnson	Maria Hill, friend of Lynda Johnson
Ted P., brother-in-law of Gail Jakus	Ann Scorzynski, friend of LaVerne Morgan
Jay Lessing, friend of LaVerne Morgan	Kristin White, daughter of Sue Herman
Jeanne Jimenez, daughter of Shirley Rau	Laura Sussman, mother of Kimberly Carroll
Cindy Molter, mother of Fred Ankebrant	Louie Baumgartner, son-in-law of Bob Lieske
Mark Molter, uncle of Fred Ankebrant	Richard Kurcharski, father of Jenny Resterhouse
Ashton Miller, nephew of Jenny & Kurt Koeff	Sharon Maschke, sister-in-law of Pam Maschke
Terry Betchner, friend of Dianne Niese	Finn Morgan, great-grandson of Shirley & Bob Lieske
Beth Klosinski, daughter of Linda Schmidt	Tim Ingram, grandson of Carole & Ron Ropel
Tom Ervin, former father-in-law of Shelly Rosenstock	Denise Hajos, friend of Kelly Sachse
The Lynn Gillen Family, granddaughter to Fred & Carol Mueller	Sandy, sister of Kevin Ernst
	Bonnie, friend of Kurt & Jenny Koeff

*Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others*