

St. Olaf Lutheran Church
Sunday, December 22, 2024
4th Sunday of Advent

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

Welcome & Announcements

Advent Candle Lighting

Gathering Litany

We live in a world that trades in isolation and comparison,
competition and fear.

**We are waiting for the One
who will turn the world around,
causing us to live in connection and compassion,
mutual support and liberation.**

We live in a world that races for money and success,
that worships busyness and productivity,
that hoards and consumes.

**We are waiting for the One
who will turn the world around
so we will know that there is enough
and that we are enough,
and so we can be still and rest.**

We live in a world that tries to hide from death
by pursuing eternal youth.

We are waiting for the One
**who will turn the world around
and bring new life from places we would call
dead and worthless.**

We live in a world that is broken and hurting.

**We are waiting for the One
who will turn the world around
to heal and comfort all people.**

God, restore our hope in this time of watching and waiting.
Give us a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
counsel and might,
knowledge and reverent trembling in your presence.
Reveal to us that our stories are woven together,
that we will be healed and whole

when all people are fed and free.
Gather us together in the shelter of your righteousness.
Amen.

Light all four candles – *The candles are for Hope, Faith, Joy, and Peace*

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

ELW 257 v 1-4

***Confession and Forgiveness**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
alive in the world,
reviving creation,
arriving soon.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,
we confess that we have sinned.
We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.
We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,
we confess that we have sinned.
We have turned away from our neighbors.
We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,
we confess that we have sinned.
We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.
A righteous branch springs forth:
it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,
in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
receive the grace and forgiveness of God
through ✠ Christ Jesus,
whose day draws near.

Amen.

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**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

First Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

^{5a} and he shall be the one of peace.

L: Word of God. Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b} My soul proclaims the greatness [|] of the Lord,

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in [|] God my Savior,

⁴⁸ **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your [|] lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will [|] call me blessed:

⁴⁹ you, the Almighty, have done great [|] things for me
and holy [|] is your name.

⁵⁰ **You have mercy on [|] those who fear you,**
from generation to [|] generation.

⁵¹ You have shown strength [|] with your arm
and scattered the proud in [|] their conceit,

⁵² **casting down the mighty [|] from their thrones**

and lifting | up the lowly.

⁵³ You have filled the hungry | with good things
and sent the rich | away empty.

⁵⁴ **You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**

⁵⁵ the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever.

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

L: Word of God. Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

***Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)**

pg 142

***Gospel: Luke 1:39-55**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 1st chapter

C: Glory to you, O Lord

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

P: The gospel of our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ

Children's Sermon

Emma Askildson

Sermon

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

***Hymn**

In the Bleak Midwinter

ELW 294

***Apostles Creed**

pg 105

*** Prayers of Intercession**

Lord, in your mercy,

Receive our prayer.

***Peace** (*Feel free to share a handshake or hug*)

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Please share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Offering: *Please consider giving an offering for the mission and ministry of St. Olaf. We can continue to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ with your support and generosity. God bless you. Also, please pass the attendance sheets down your row and fill out your info.*

***Offering prayer**

Creator God,

you made the whole world,

even the farthest stars,

and you draw near to feed us.

We praise you for the gifts you bless us with.

Strengthen us,

that we may live in expectation

for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

***Lord's Prayer**

***Blessing**

God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and the light,
God, our hope for the journey,
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

***Hymn**

Joy to the World

ELW 267

***Dismissal**

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

Assisting in Worship

Presider: Pastor Jim McColley

Assisting: Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

Organist: Jason Swedlund

Reader: Nancy Hamilton

Ushers: Rick Kuhlman, David Osterberg, Fran Long

Tech: Mark Oester