



St. Paul Lutheran

a different kind of church

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 20, 2020



GATHERING TOGETHER IN WORSHIP

Prelude

Breath of Heaven [Mary's Song]

Amy Grant

Words of Welcome

Pastor Anders

Children's Message

Pastor Jared

Call to Worship

P: I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my child,
Suddenly, joy was overflowing.
One: I knew love, but when you held my hand,
Suddenly, love was overflowing.
One: I knew God, but when you showed me grace,
when you forgave me,
when you loved me,
when you raised me,
Suddenly, God was overflowing.
One: So, let us worship Holy God together
As a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.
This is community.
This is the body of Christ.
Welcome home.

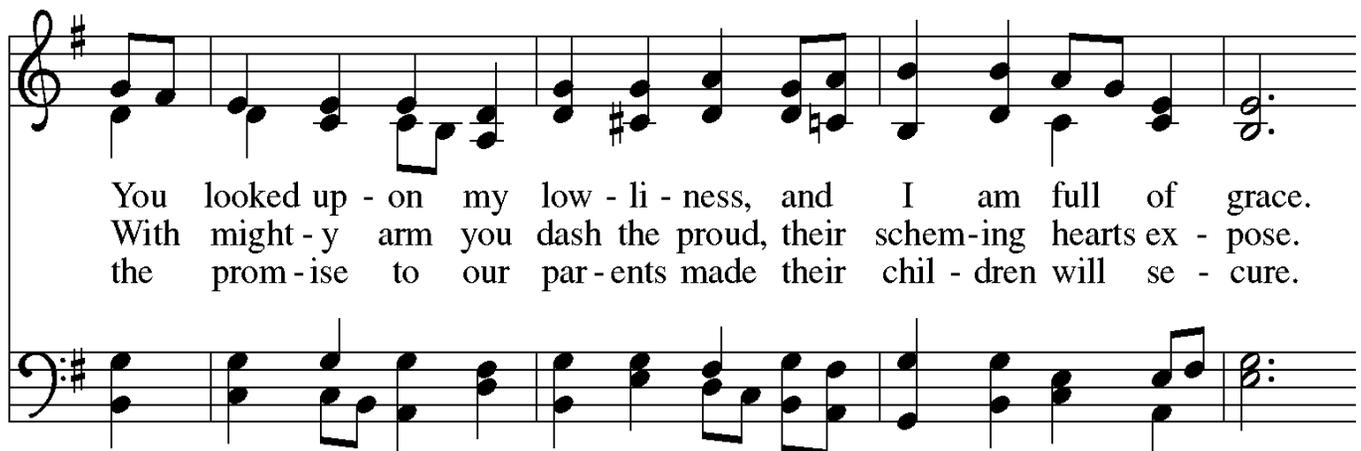
Gathering Hymn

My Soul Proclaims

ELW 251 v1&2



1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav - ior's praise!
2 To all who live in ho - ly fear your mer - cy ev - er flows.
3 To Is - ra - el, your ser - vant blest, your help is ev - er sure;



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.
With might - y arm you dash the proud, their schem - ing hearts ex - pose.
the prom - ise to our par - ents made their chil - dren will se - cure.

Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless-ing shall pro - claim—
 The ruth-less you have cast a - side, the low - ly throned in - stead;
 Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or to the Word,

great won - ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is your name.
 the hun - gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un - fed.
 and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a - dored.

Candle Lighting Liturgy

- A: I dream of music that makes my heart swell.
 B: I dream of trees that take my breath away.
 A: I dream of sunrises that wrap me in light.
 B: I dream of family dinners that feel like home.
 A: I dream of church services that give me hope.
 B: I dream of love as the default.
 A: So today, as we draw near to Christmas day, we light the candle of love.
The first four candles are lit.
 B: May this light burn bright as a reminder that God is here and God is love.
 A: We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that.
C: Amen

Lighting of the Christmas Tree

- P:** God our creator, we praise you for this Christmas tree. It is a sign of your everlasting, evergreen presence. It is a sign of the reign of heaven, sheltering the creatures of the earth under its open arms. It is a sign of the cross, shining with the light of your grace and mercy. Gracious God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. Send us your Son, the tender shoot of Jesse, who brings us light and life. May all who stand in its light eagerly welcome the true Light which never fades. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
- C: Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

P: God of Good News,
You say to me, "You are highly favored," but I struggle to see how that could be.
You say to me, "Do not be afraid," but I am afraid all the time.
You say to me, "Even the impossible is possible, just look at Elizabeth!"
But hope slips through my hands like water.
The impossible still feels impossible.
So today I pray,
Today we pray:
Teach us to sing like Mary.
Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth.
Teach us to trust like the angels.
Forgive us when we can only do one at a time, or none at all.
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 Illumination

P: Holy God,
Before you could speak, you were speaking—
Leaping in wombs, kicking, stretching, jumping for joy.
You have always found a way to show up in our midst,
Particularly on our fearful or lonely days.
So today, as we crack open our Bibles,
Fluttering through these old beloved pages,
We ask that you would move again.
Stir in us.
Speak to us.
Fill us with the Holy Spirit.
And if we are not able to hear your Word clearly,
Then give us Elizabeths
Who will point out your presence in delight and joy.
Before you could speak, you were speaking,
So here and now, Creator God, we are listening.
C: **Amen.**

LISTENING AS GOD SPEAKS TO US

Lesson

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

L: A reading from 2 Samuel.

Now 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.

- L: Word of God, Word of Life.
- C: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation

Return to the Lord (Carl Heine)



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your God, who is
gra - cious and mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Gospel

Luke 1:26-45

- L: The Holy Gospel according to Luke.
- C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.

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

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Pastor Anders

Hymn of the Day

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

ELW 265, v1-3



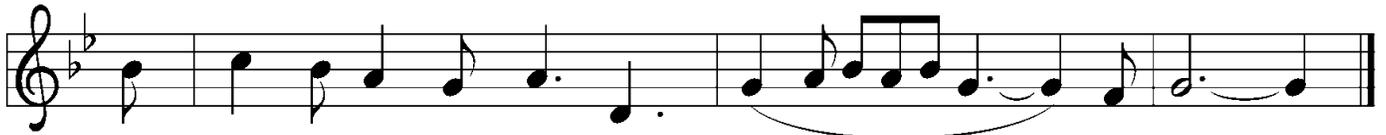
1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 “For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



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.”

Affirmation of Faith

A: We believe that this world is hard—
Harder than it has to be.
When the world falls apart around us,
We believe in listening for the angels that say, “Do not be afraid,”
And in seeking out the Elizabeths in our lives—
Those who laugh with joy at our arrival
And throw open the doors to their homes.
We believe that healthy relationships can offer healing,
Through the laughter of cousins,
The joy shared between siblings,
And the home found in partnership.
Therefore, we believe in church families, In chosen families,
And in the love that extends beyond family.
We believe in friendships, In neighbors,
And in leaning on each other when the going gets tough.
We believe in the Triune God—
Lover, Beloved, and Love itself—
Inherently relational, always connected, and never alone.
We believe that that same belovedness exists for us.
We believe that we are loved and claimed,
Never alone.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Prayers of the People

At the end of each petition: ...Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Offering

At this time, we encourage you to give your offering online at stpaulwheaton.org by clicking the "Give Now" button or by mailing your offering to St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Ave., Wheaton, IL 60187. If you have questions about giving, please contact the church.

MEETING AT GOD'S TABLE

Offertory 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.
In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

C: **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Sanctus

Return to the Lord (Carl Heine)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord. God of pow'r, God of might.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord. We praise you for your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est! Bless'd is the

one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est!

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer *(we invite you to pray as your heart guides you)*

P: Lord, remember us in your love and teach us to pray,

C: **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

**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.**

Invitation to the Table

Agnus Dei

Return to the Lord (Carl Heine)



Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Post-Communion Blessing

Post-Communion Prayer

P: Gracious and abundant God,
 you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.
 In this bread and cup you give us life forever.
 In your boundless mercy, strengthen us
 and open our hearts to the world's needs,
 for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Announcements

SENT FORTH INTO THE WEEK

Sending Hymn

Joy to the World

ELW 267

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin, and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Benediction and Dismissal

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.**

P: Go in peace. Make a difference.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

St. Paul Prayer List

Prayers of the Congregation are offered for these members

*Beth Baumgardner, Donna Bowers,
Betty Bradshaw, Julie Braun, Paul Brinkman,
Barb Deli, Marty Findling,
Connie Gerardi, Lois Glaybo, Betty Justie,
Beverly Lamberg, Dwight Nielsen,
Stacie Pierce, Janice Stewart, and
Carl Sodergren,*

We pray for the families of **Marguerite Wenzel, Doris Zahn**, Laura Pohl's mother, **Anna Mae and Willis Suckut**, Heidi Carr's parents, **Joseph Cook**, son of Paul and Meg Cook, and **Felicia Trevino**, sister of Lydia Trevino, who passed away recently.

for the following family and friends

Frank Tereza
cousin of Sherri D'Agostino

Vonnie Oehman and Viola Melendez
Relative of Lydia Trevino

Joe, Michelle, and Angela Trevino
Relatives of Lydia Trevino

Joyce Cooper
Mother of Elise Wisner

The Chris & Tabitha Trobaugh Family
family of Michelle Francis-Pyskaty

Norma Hansen and Erik Schroder
relatives of the Toffeys

Nadine Melgren
mother of Susan McGinnis

Brett & Carola
friends of the Lindgrens

Lori Houston
niece of Ron Mertzlufft

Jeremy Fox
friend of Tori Adams

Martin and Dolores
friends of Christopher Cholewa

Scott Viger
brother of Cherie Schumm

Tom Ferguson
husband of Stacie Pierce's friend

Kathryn Palmer
daughter of Carolyn Lukens

Stephen Poremba
nephew of Kathy Baidis

Vernon Allen
father of Julie Michalak

Haley
friend of the Huber Family

Kay Brend
friend of the Yurkos

and prayer is also offered for

Tech Sergeant Luke Scheffler
son of Glen and Sandy Scheffler,
recently returned from the Middle East

1st Lieutenant Eric Modransky
son of Renée and Bob Cabay, deployed to
Ukraine with the National Guard

*all active duty members of the congregation
and for all those affected by the global
pandemic of the COVID-19 virus.*

The altar flowers are given by Barb and Terry Kohn in memory of Terry's brother Noel Kohn and Barb's brother Steve Helle.

If you need Pastoral Care at this time, please contact

Pastor Jared Olson
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Pastor Anders Nelson
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309.335.7922