# The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Year B
December 24, 2023



Advent carries two simultaneous visions of our expectations: we await yet again the birth of the babe in the manger, and we also await Christ's coming again to fulfill all things. We often prepare for Advent by "getting ready": planning, organizing, and ordering supplies for various gatherings and worship services. Yet preparing for the coming of Christ is not a matter of having everything under control. Christ's arrival disrupts—disrupts injustice, sin, and brokenness in a society in which we are deeply embedded. A prayer for Christ to come to us is a prayer for a holy disruption of our lives that we cannot control and that we might struggle to accept.

9 a.m., The Holy Eucharist, Rite II The Rev. William Petersen, Celebrant Holly Simons, Minister of Music

# THE GATHERING ~ The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Prelude** O Come,O Come Emmanuel – 13<sup>th</sup> c. plainsong arr. by Mark Hayes Break Forth Into Joy - J.S. Bach/arr. V.D. Thompson

**Processional Hymn** We Hail You God's Anointed (*text sung to tune "Ellacombe - All glory, laud and honor"*)

We hail You God's anointed, the long awaited One! Hail in the time appointed, Your reign on earth begun! You come to break oppression, to set the captive free; to take away transgression, and rule in equity.

You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth; and joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in Your path to birth. Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go; and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.

The wise shall bow before you and gold and incense bring; all nations shall adore You, and praise all peoples sing; To You shall prayer unceasing and daily vows be said, Your realm is still increasing, with You, O Christ, as Head.

# **Opening Acclamation**

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.

**People** You come to your people and set them free.

Gloria (sung to the tune "Angels we have heard on high")

Glory be to God on high! Peace, goodwill to all the earth. Let us sing a joyful song to the Christ, the Living Word. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

# **Collect Of The Day** Lighting of the Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

# **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

This blessing is read when lighting all four candles.

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we dream and wait for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. Amen.

THE WORD ~ God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

**Lessons** We hear the Word of God proclaimed.

**The First Lesson** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

In our Hebrew scriptures the enemies of David have been subdued and David turns his thoughts to building a temple to the Lord.

Reader A reading from the second book of Samuel.

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.

*Reader* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

**People** Thanks be to God

### Psalm 89

The Lord is praised for faithful love and mighty justice. As a Father, God promises to the anointed servant David an everlasting kingdom.

Your love, O LORD, for ever will I sing; \*

from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; \* you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one; \*

I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

'I will establish your line for ever, \*

and preserve your throne for all generations.""

You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: \*

"I have set the crown upon a warrior

and have exalted one chosen out of the people.

I have found David my servant; \*

with my holy oil have I anointed him.

My hand will hold him fast \*

and my arm will make him strong.

No enemy shall deceive him, \*

nor any wicked man bring him down.

I will crush his foes before him \*

and strike down those who hate him.

My faithfulness and love shall be with him, \*

and he shall be victorious through my Name.

I shall make his dominion extend \*

from the Great Sea to the River.

He will say to me, 'You are my Father, \*

my God, and the rock of my salvation.'

### **The Second Lesson** Romans 16:25-27

In words that close his long letter to the community in Rome, Paul reminds the new Christians of the mystery now disclosed to all nations, bringing them to faith and obedience. Although the secret had long been kept in silence, the promise of the eternal God has been revealed and is made known through the prophetic scriptures. Glory to God who enables disciples to stand firm in the good news of Jesus!

Reader A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

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 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—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People Thanks be to God

# **The Gospel** Luke 1:26-38

Our gospel relates the story of the visit to Mary by an angel: Gabriel tells her that she is to bear Jesus, who will be called the Son of God. This happens during the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth, a kinswoman of Mary, who will soon give birth to John the Baptist. Mary is assured of God's favor and that this is the work of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the prophecy to David of an eternal kingdom. The narrative points to the transcendent origin of this child born into history.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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.

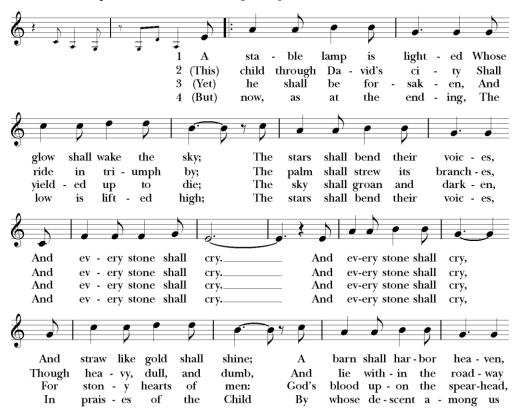
Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

**Sermon** The Rev. William Petersen

Silence for reflection may be kept. The people stand in body or spirit.

# **Hymn of the Day** #104 A stable lamp is lighted





### Nicene Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The leader and people pray responsively.

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. Merciful God,

### receive our prayer.

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. Merciful God,

### receive our prayer.

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Merciful God,

### receive our prayer.

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill. Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home. Merciful God,

### receive our prayer.

You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

# receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God,

### receive our prayer.

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.** 

# **Confession**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

### **Absolution**

Hear these words of assurance:

God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.** 

The Peace

We share the gift of Christ's peace and love.

**Announcements** 

We share our life of faith together in community.

**The Offering** Having listened to the Word of God, affirmed our faith, confessed our sins, received forgiveness and shared in the peace, we are prepared for the drama and miracle of the Holy Communion. At the offertory, we gratefully offer back to God some of what God has given us, symbolically in the bread and wine, and in the money we give.



For everyone's safety, we will not pass the traditional plate during today's service. Instead, an offering plate is available at the entrances to the worship space, or you may visit wolfesaints.com/donate.

Let us with gladness present the offerings and thanksgivings of our life and labor to the Lord.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **Eucharistic Prayer C**

CelebrantThe Lord be with you.PeopleAnd also with you.CelebrantLift up your hearts.

**People** We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

# Glory to you for ever and ever.

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

### By your will they were created and have their being.

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

### Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

# By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Celebrant and People

#### Sanctus

(sung to the tune "Bring a Torch)

Holy, holy One... God of power, God of might. Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed, blessed is the One Who comes, Blessed! Blessed! In the Name of God.

The Celebrant continues

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

### We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.

Lord God of our Fathers; God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Rachel; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

### Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. **AMEN** 

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

**Lamb of God** (sung to the tune "O Come, O Come Emmanuel")

O Lamb of God You take away our sin; have mercy on us, give us Your peace. Prepare us to receive Your grace, and teach us how to follow Your ways. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come to you, O Israel.

A period of silence is kept.

The Gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

# Prayer For Spiritual Communion for those worshipping online

There is a long-standing practice in the Episcopal Church to offer a means for people to receive Holy Communion spiritually when it cannot be received physically.

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.

Since I cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

# **Communion Choral Meditation** The Yearning – C. Courtney/S.B. Boersma

There is a yearning in hearts weighed down by ancient grief, and centuries of sorrow. There is a yearning in hearts that in the darkness hide and in the shades of death abide, a yearning for tomorrow.

There is a yearning, a yearning for the Promised One, the Firstborn of creation. There is a yearning for the Lord who visited His own, and by His death for sin atoned, to bring to us salvation. REFRAIN: Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts, the yearning...

There is a yearning that fills the hearts of those who wait the day of His appearing. There is a yearning when all our sorrows are erased and we shall see the One who placed within our hearts the yearning. REFRAIN

# **Prayer After Communion**

Let us pray together:

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

# **Sending Blessing**

May you trust in whatever sacred thing bubbles up from within you.

May you remember that the Divine takes on flesh and yours is no exception.

May you be a conduit of eternal love, and a moment of grace for a world that waits and longs for hope.

In the name of the one who  $\maltese$  creates, saves and sustains you.

Amen.

**Sending Hymn** *Found on page 15* ELW #248 People, Look East

### **Dismissal**

Celebrant Go in peace. Keep awake.

**People** Thanks be to God.

**Postlude** Go, Tell it on the mountain - Trad. Spiritual/arr. Carl Simone

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### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **December 24 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent**

We welcome all who are visiting with us today or who are new in our midst. Please complete a Welcome Card found in the pew racks and sign the guest book in the Narthex. All are invited to join us for coffee hour in the parish hall downstairs immediately following worship.

### LARGE PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE TABLE IN NARTHEX.

### **PLEASE PRAY for:**

*In our Parish Cycle of Prayer*: Priscilla Theberge, Candace & Sebastian Tordonato *In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer*: All of the churches, missions and missional communities of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, and for peace on earth.

*In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:* 

For those who have died: Judy Boedecker

#### Our Parish

Howard Blaney, Jim & Anne Bullitt, Prue Fitts, Felicity Freund, Judy Hess, Louise

Graham, Don & Sandi Johnson, The Jeffers family (Polly, Dave, Rachael), Zell Kellogg, Bhupendra & Judy Khetani, Norma Lunney, Jacqueline McLaughlin, Penny Meyer, Connie Mitchell, Warren Muir, Carol Pearson, Bree Schuette, Sebastian Tordonato, Inger Woerheide.

### Our Family & Friends

Basil Brown, Rebecca DeNeault, Candy Desrocher, Michael Dowd, Anne Fish, Stephanie Fullam, Ruth Gray, Linda Hall, Susan Belt Hartson, Faye Juul, Jim Lunney, Margie, Tom Southern, Marguerite Truesdale, Kyle Willaims, Peggy Young.

# The Altar Flowers are given in the glory of God.

If you wish names added or removed from the prayer list, please contact the Parish Office by phone or email: allsaints@metrocast.net

# Birthdays this week:

Bill Woodard 12/25 Liz Rice 12/27 Sandra Ellis 12/30

### **Anniversaries this week:**

Bill & Penny Meyer 12/27 Peter & Kim Marshall 12/28 David & Polly Jeffers 12/29

December Ministry Assignments	24-Advent 4 9am Christmas Eve 5pm & 9pm	Jan 7-Epiphany 1
Altar Guild	Susan Harding Lucy Hancock Candace Tordonato	Mary Bertsch Gayle Gurney
Usher	Jones Hancock	Jones
Lectors 10am	Jane Nielsen	Aiden Schuette-Simon
Eucharistic Ministers 8am 10am	Cate McMahon J. Nielsen, B. Woodard A. Slocum, D. DeKemper	Jay Wyman Dianne Wasmuth Jane Nielsen
Greeters	Volunteer	Volunteer
Flower Guild	Christmas Poinsettias	L. Moughty
Flower Delivery	Meg Sislane	D. Pierpont
Counting @ 10am	12/26 Deb Hoyt Carolyn Sundquist	1/9 Deb Hoyt B. Woodard

### **Sending Hymn**



**About All Saints'** ~ We welcome you to a church that is clear about the Christian faith that stands in the rich tradition of Christian worship that encourages people to grow in the faith they profess, that believes we ought to live so as to make a difference in the world. If you are looking for such a church, then All Saints' Episcopal Church is for you - we invite you into our community of faith.

**How to use this Worship Bulletin** ~ We follow the order of worship from The Book of Common Prayer as it is printed in this bulletin. Leader parts are in regular print; the congregation parts are in **bold** print. Notes and directions are printed in *italics*. Hymn numbers are noted in this bulletin and can be found in The Hymnal 1982 found in the pew racks.

#### All are invited to receive Communion in this church.

**The Common Cup** *as an Option* Following guidance from Bishop +Rob to clergy and discussion with our Worship and Music Team and Vestry, we will offer the option of receiving wine by common cup as we offer the option of gluten free bread during Holy Communion. The Eucharistic Ministers will continue to distribute wine via individual cups and if you desire the common cup\*, please ask Pastor Bill (just as you would for gluten free).

\*Note: For sanitation concerns and at the direction of our bishop, we will no longer offer the opportunity for Intinction (the dipping of the bread/wafer into the wine. The common cup is only available for drinking from.

**Facility Information** ~ Handicap accessible restrooms are located downstairs in the hallways exiting the Parish Hall and upstairs in the hallway exiting the sanctuary. A small restroom is located off the narthex lobby at the rear of the worship space. We welcome children in worship, but should you (or they) need, an unstaffed nursery area is located off the narthex lobby.

**Seeking a Church Home?** ~ If you would like additional information about All Saints', are seeking a faith community to call home, or interested in exploring your faith, please speak with the rector.

Masks are not required in the building at the present time. However, if you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, then you are encouraged to do so.

**Sharing of the peace** will be done from your seat only.

Offering plates are available at entrances to the worship space or giving online @ wolfesaints.com.

Ministers: All the People of All Saints'
Bishop: The Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld
Rector: The Rev. William "Bill" Petersen
Priest Associate: The Rev. Elizabeth Preysner
Minister of Music: Holly Simons
Sunday School Teacher: Danielle Pierpont
Parish Administrator: Debra Hoyt
Sexton: Mark McLaughlin

We continue to livestream for those unable to worship in person.

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