

LIGHT
HAS COME INTO THE WORLD



St. David's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Saturday, December 23, 2017
5:30 pm
Interim Pastor: Rev. Larry Hoover
Interim: Bishop Emeritus Gregory Pile
Church: 479-4110; Fax: 479-2994
www.stdavidslutheran.org

Welcome to St. David's Lutheran Church!

We are blessed by your presence and honored that you have chosen to worship with us today. Please take a moment to sign the friendship sheet that is located in the booklet at the end of each pew, near the center aisle. These sheets will be collected with the offering.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is offered to all who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and who recognize the Sacrament as the true body and blood of our Lord. Baptized children are also welcome to the Lord's table at St. David's with the guidance and consent of their parents or guardians.

Prayer Requests may be made by placing the request in the small wooden box at the rear, near the doors through which you entered. The acolyte will collect the requests and they will be included during the prayers of the congregation.

For your comfort there is a restroom, equipped with a changing table and supplies and a water fountain located upstairs. Simply exit through the double doors back into the narthex. The restroom is straight ahead in the parlor, beside the grandfather clock, and the water fountain is to the right at the beginning of the hallway.

Devotional –Copies of Scripture readings for the month of December, Gospel Messages for Advent, Christ in Our Home (large print) devotions and The Word in Season devotions are located on the table in the back, next to the prayer box.

INTRODUCTION

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."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins to God our Father, asking for forgiveness in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

Who made heaven and earth.

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy Name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

The Congregation kneels/sits.

Silence is kept for reflection.

O God, our heavenly Father, I confess to you that I have grievously sinned against you in many ways; not only by outward transgressions, but also by secret thoughts and desires which I cannot fully understand, but which are all known to You. I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my offences, and I call upon Your great goodness to have mercy upon me, for the sake of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to forgive my sins, and graciously to help my infirmities. Amen.

For self-centered living,
and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

For longing to have what is not ours,
and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

For misuse of human relationships,
and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

For jealousies that divide families and nations,
and for rivalries that create strife and warfare:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God,
and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

For hurtful words that condemn,
and for angry deeds that harm:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ,
and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:
**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through the Holy Spirit God cleanses us and gives us the power to proclaim the mighty acts of the one who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The assembly stands.

GREETING

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

And also with you.

LITANY FOR ADVENT O ANTIPHONS

O Wisdom,
coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,
pervading and permeating all creation,
you order all things with strength and gentleness:
Come now and teach us the way to salvation.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Adonai,
Ruler of the house of Israel,
you appeared in the burning bush to Moses
and gave him the law on Sinai:
Come with outstretched arm to save us.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Root of Jesse,
rising as a sign for all the peoples,
before you earthly rulers will keep silent,
and nations give you honor:
Come quickly to deliver us.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Key of David,
Scepter over the house of Israel,
you open and no one can close,
you close and no one can open:
Come to set free the prisoners
who live in the darkness and the shadow of death.
Come, Lord Jesus.

O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light,
Sun of justice:
Come, shine on those who live in darkness
and in the shadow of death.
Come, Lord Jesus.

O Ruler of the nations,
Monarch for whom the people long,
you are the Cornerstone uniting all humanity:
Come, save us all,
whom you formed out of clay.
Come, Lord Jesus.

O Immanuel,
our Sovereign and Lawgiver,
desire of the nations and Savior of all:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.
Come, Lord Jesus.

After a brief silence, the leader concludes the litany:

God of grace,
ever faithful to your promises,
the earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming
and looks forward with longing
to his return at the end of time,
Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes,
for he is Lord forever and ever.
Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

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.

The assembly is seated.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: ADVENT 4

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

In your Son, Emmanuel,

you have shown us your light

and saved us from the power of sin.

Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Increase our longing for your presence,

that at the celebration of your Son's birth

his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst,

for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

A reading from 2 Samuel the 7th chapter.

{Instead of David building a house (temple) for the Lord, the Lord promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, the Lord's anointed.}

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the 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." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I 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. ⁷Wherever 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?" ⁸Now 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; ⁹and 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. ¹⁰And 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, ¹¹from 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. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Luke 1:46b-55 (read responsively)

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷**and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

⁴⁸for 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.

⁵⁰His 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.

⁵²He 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.

⁵⁴He 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."

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

A reading from Romans the 16th chapter.

{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.}

²⁵Now 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 ²⁶but 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—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

The holy gospel according to Luke the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

{In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people (Mary) from littleknown places (Nazareth). 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 his gospel.}

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

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

Silence for reflection may follow.

The assembly stands.

Together we confess our faith:

NICENE CREED

**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;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

**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 and the Son.**

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He 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 INTERCESSION

Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people.

A brief silence.

Your eternal reign has come into the world. Give us ears to hear your call to serve your kingdom, and send us out to those who are hurting and in need of good news. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You created the mystery and beauty of the earth. Replenish rivers, lakes, seas, and all bodies of water, so that plants, animals, and humans can have life and be refreshed. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You bring down the powerful and raise up the lowly. Where war rages, shatter hatred with forgiveness and peace. Where fear rules, make your all-powerful and eternal presence known. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You remember us with mercy, Lord, as you have done for all generations. Fill us, comfort us, strengthen us, and enlighten us. Make your will known to all in need. Today we pray especially for Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You called Mary to bear your Son. We pray for pregnant women, for mothers and fathers of infants and small children, and especially for couples who bear the pain of infertility, miscarriage, or stillbirth. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Your kingdom has no end. With your servants throughout time, women and men, old and young, unite us forever in your reign of peace and joy. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to 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,

forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

QUIET MEDITATION

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL MESSAGE
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Fastest. Pregnancy. Ever.

Usually a human pregnancy lasts nine months—and it's a few days, not a few hours, between our gospels announcing Mary's pregnancy on the fourth Sunday of Advent and the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve. But nothing will be impossible with the church calendar! Today, annunciation and delivery touch like folded segments of an accordion, or a wrinkle in time.

Once a child was reading a book about where babies come from. It explained that a human egg was smaller "than the dot at the end of this sentence." The child stopped reading, caught up in wonder, staring at the dot. How could something invisible be transformed into . . . me? You? Every one of us?

One thing we can say with confidence about each pregnancy, whether it originates the old-fashioned way, is helped along by modern science, or follows from a young woman's perplexing conversation with an angel: we don't know exactly when it starts. After a baby is born we can count backwards and make some guesses, but in the moment we cannot feel precisely when that new life blossoms.

In the darkness, where we can't perceive them, everyday miracles take shape. In Advent night as we long for peace on earth, and in our midwinters of the spirit when hope is far away, we are reminded that new life develops within us before we're consciously aware of it. Even now. Today. For nothing will be impossible with God.

Pondering, we move with Mary from "How can this be?" to "Let it be." Time wrinkles, a dot expands, and the Word becomes flesh to pitch a tent among us. For the power of the Most High, whisking away the offer of a cedar palace, loves to travel light and takes joy in surprising those who were said to be barren. The Spirit overshadows, and we ourselves become God's house, a moving tabernacle, a holy dwelling—dancing in darkness at the wonder of a child.

Daily Readings for the Week December 24-30

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Monday

Luke 1:46b-55
1 Samuel 1:1-18
Hebrews 9:1-14

Tuesday

Luke 1:46b-55
1 Samuel 1:19-28
Hebrews 8:1-13

Wednesday

Luke 1:46b-55
1 Samuel 2:1-10
Mark 11:1-11

Friday

Psalm 96
Zephaniah 3:8-13
Romans 10:5-13

Saturday

Psalm 96
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Romans 13:11-14

Sunday

Nativity of Our Lord I

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

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