

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

December 19 and 20, 2020

5:00 p.m. Saturday, 8:00 a.m. Sunday



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The Best Mystery, Revealed

AS WE GATHER

We stand at the threshold not only of an old and familiar story but also that of an old yet familiar mystery, the greatest mystery ever told. It doesn't appear on any list of greatest novels or plays written by earthly authors. It is the mystery of God. More specifically, it is the mystery of His love for the salvation of the world. But as we prepare to review the mystery of God—the Son of God becoming incarnate in our human flesh and born of the Virgin Mary—the greater mystery is that He, Jesus, looks over your shoulder now in the retelling and hearing of Christmas. The greater mystery is that you not only know the old, familiar story but also that you believe it. And believing brings about the best mystery of all—that your sins are forgiven, that you have a new, eternal life, that you are forever a child, a son, a daughter born of God. The Gospel—the wisdom and mystery of God—is no longer a secret. For it is told by your own mouth singing of God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ.

✂ PREPARATION ✂

Preludes

“A Great and Mighty Wonder”
“Carillon on ‘O Come, All Ye Shepherds’”

Burkhardt
Gordon Young

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn

“A Great and Mighty Wonder”
Verses 1-4

LSB 383



1 A great and might - y won - der, A full and ho - ly cure:
2 The Word be - comes in - car - nate And yet re - mains on high,
3 While thus they sing your Mon - arch, Those bright an - gel - ic bands,
4 Since all He comes to ran - som, By all be He a - dored,



The vir - gin bears the in - fant With vir - gin hon - or pure!
And cher - u - bim sing an - thems To shep - herds from the sky.
Re - joice, O vales and moun - tains, And o - ceans, clap your hands.
The in - fant born in Beth - l'em, The Sav - ior and the Lord.

Refrain



Pro - claim the Sav - ior's birth: “To God on high be



glo - ry And peace to all the earth!”

Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

Confession and Absolution

Pastor: That our eyes and our ears may be open to receive the mystery of God's love, let us first empty ourselves of everything that has closed our hearts to God, confessing our sin and need of forgiveness and life.

People: **At the Lord's own invitation and command, I confess all my sins to God, the very thoughts, words, and deeds with which I have offended Him and hurt my neighbor. I come now in the sincere hope and faith of the forgiveness of God made known to the whole world in the mystery of His Son, Jesus Christ, who has sacrificed His own flesh**

and blood for me. Remove my sin and guilt for His sake, and restore a right spirit within me. Amen.

Pastor: Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Lighting the Advent Candle

Pastor: **Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,**

People: the light no darkness can overcome.

Pastor: **Let Your light scatter the darkness**

People: and illumine Your Church.



Hymn

“We Light the Advent Candle”

Verses 1-4



1 We light the Ad - vent can - dle And wait for Christ to
2 We light the Ad - vent can - dle And thank the Lord for
3 We light the Ad - vent can - dle And sing with cheer - ful
4 We light the Ad - vent can - dle And share the won - drous



come. With hope, we trust the prom - ise That
rest. With peace, we know our Je - sus Has
heart. With joy, we spread the mes - sage— A
Word. With love, we tell of Je - sus Till



He will bring us home. Our hope is in our
come to be our guest. This peace be - yond all
bless - ing to im - part. Our joy is nev - er
all a - round have heard. God's love is for each



Sav - ior Who wins for us God's fa - vor. We
know - ing With - in our hearts is glow - ing. We
end - ing; The Son to us is send - ing. We
na - tion Through - out His whole cre - a - tion. We



wait with grow - ing light Till God makes all things right!
wait with grow - ing light Till God makes all things right!
wait with grow - ing light Till God makes all things right!
wait with grow - ing light Till God makes all things right!

Tune: Public domain
Text: © 2013 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: Creative Worship License no. 110000713

✂ WORD ✂

Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

(The Lord's Covenant with David.)

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all

his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: "Go and tell my servant David, `This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.

Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"` "

"Now then, tell my servant David, `This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.' "

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

(The birth of Jesus foretold.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Like, the 1st Chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son

of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

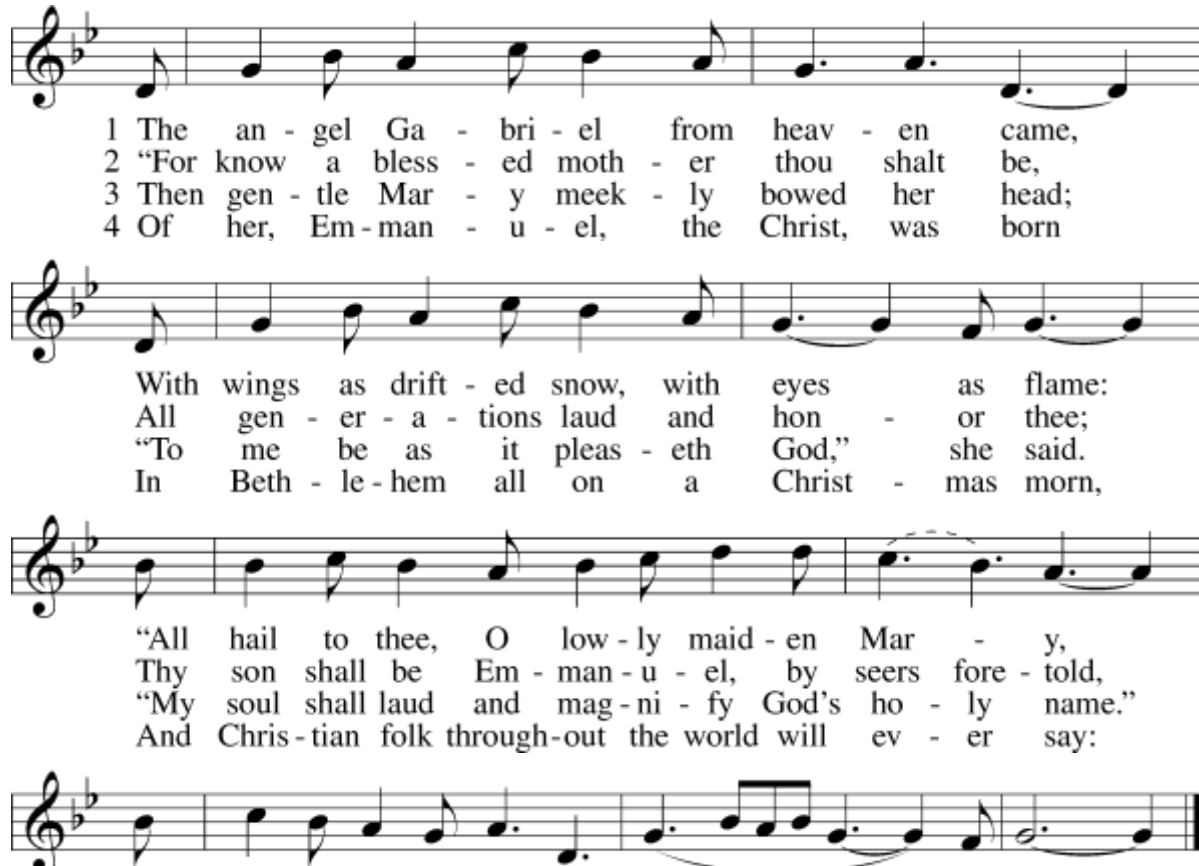
Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

LSB 356



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

Tune and text: Public domain

Sermon "Truly Impossible"

Pastor John Larson

TEXT: Luke 1:26-38

Second Article of the Creed – Catechism

Pastor: With the Church around the world, we confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed, which was formed as the Church expanded to Gentile lands, such as were represented by the Magi who visited the Christ Child.

Today we confess the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and speak together the section of Luther's Small Catechism that explains it.

People: I believe in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

Pastor: What does this mean?

People: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.
This is most certainly true.

Prayer of the Church

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

Offering Offerings will be collected at the back, in the Narthex.

✠ HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION ✠

The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have been instructed and have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with "Amen!", a word of affirmation and belief.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

Preface (Divine Service, Setting One)

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

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

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

People: 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.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

"Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love" (Verses 1-5)

LSB 900



1 Je - sus! Name of won-drous love, Name all oth - er names a - bove,
2 Je - sus! Name de - creed of old, To the maid-en moth - er told,
3 Je - sus! Name of price - less worth To the fall - en of the earth
4 Je - sus! Name of mer - cy mild, Giv - en to the ho - ly Child
5 Je - sus! On - ly name that's giv'n Un - der all the might - y heav'n



Un - to which must ev - 'ry knee Bow in deep hu - mil - i - ty.
Kneel - ing in her low - ly cell, By the an - gel Ga - bri - el.
For the prom - ise that it gave, "Je - sus shall His peo - ple save."
When the cup of hu - man woe First He tast - ed here be - low.
Where - by those to sin en - slaved Burst their fet - ters and are saved.

Tune and text: Public domain

"What is this Lovely Fragrance?" (Organ)

Paul Manz

General Communion Blessing

Post-Communion Thanksgiving

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

Benediction (Divine Service, Setting One)

Pastor: 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.

People: Amen.

Closing Hymn

“Joy to the World”

LSB 387



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings
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



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.

Text and tune: Public domain

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude "Festal Fanfare" (From the Fourth Concerto)
(and Row by Row Dismissal)

J.S. Bach

Serving in Worship

OFFICIANT and CELEBRANT
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

Pastor John Larson
Michael Zehnder

For unto you is born this day
in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11



Fourth Sunday
OF
ADVENT



A wooden advent calendar with numbered doors (1-24) and illustrations of the Nativity scene. The calendar is decorated with black garlands and a star. The text "Be patient... until the coming of the Lord." is overlaid on the image.

Be patient...
until the
coming of
the Lord.

JAMES 5:7