

4th Sunday of Advent

12/24/2023

Greg Fetzner, Pastor

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor Emeritus

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand, as you are able.

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

P 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 our Lord.

C **Amen**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

P Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. 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.

C Amen

GATHERING HYMN [ELW#246 "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!"](#)

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.

The four candles of the Advent Wreath are lit as the following prayer is offered.

P Let us pray. 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.

C Amen



A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



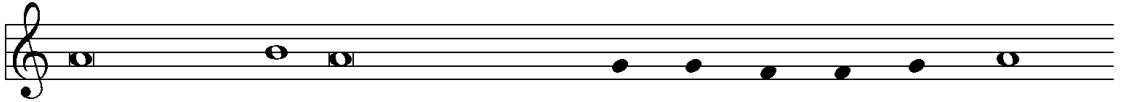
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. **C** A - men

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. 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.

C **Amen**

Please be seated.

PSALM 113

L ¹Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord.

C ²**Let the name of the Lord be blessed, from this time forth forevermore.**

L ³From the rising of the sun to its going down let the name of the Lord be praised.

C ⁴**The Lord is high above all nations; God's glory above the heavens.**

L ⁵Who is like the Lord our God, who sits enthroned on high,

C ⁶**but stoops to behold the heavens and the earth?**

L ⁷The Lord takes up the weak out of the dust and lifts up the poor from the ashes,

C ⁸**enthroning them with the rulers, with the rulers of the people.**

L ⁹The Lord makes the woman of a childless house to be a joyful mother of children.

C ¹**Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants of the Lord! praise the name of the Lord.**

LUKE 1:5-25, 57-80

L1 A reading from Luke: ⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. ⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside.

L2 ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of

Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

L1 ¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." ¹⁹The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

L2 ²¹Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. ²²When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. ²³When his time of service was ended, he went to his home. ²⁴After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, ²⁵"This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

L1 ⁵⁷Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." ⁶¹They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." ⁶²Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him.

L2 ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. ⁶⁷Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy...

HYMN OF THE DAY [ELW#250 "Blessed Be the God of Israel"](#)

SERMON: ([Sermon Audio Link](#))

Please stand, as you are able.

- P** Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
C **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

OFFERING*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

The Offering is received and is presented at the altar.



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spir -
it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take



not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the
 joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

L 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.

L 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,

C **receive our prayer.**

L 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,

C **receive our prayer.**

L 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,

C **receive our prayer.**

L Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill, especially Bob Brackbill, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, Rebecca Brennan, the Elshafei family, Alexis Erdman, Samantha Erdman, the Fleming family, Jeff Fultz, Mary Goehring, Bob Hardy, Angela Hays, Mark Hughes, the Johnson family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Charlotte Leer, the McNamara family, Donna

Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Julie Obie, Peter Olsen, Brenda Penyak, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Claudia Schober, D. J. Singer, Jack Smith, MaKenzie Snyder, the Spiegler family, Chuck Trautwein, Esther Trautwein, Rich Wohkittel, and Pastor Jack.. 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,

C receive our prayer.

L 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 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L Blessed are you for 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,

C receive our prayer.

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

C Amen.

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

**C 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**

- P** 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.
- C** **Amen**

SENDING HYMN [ELW#257 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"](#)

- P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Please join us this evening at 7 p.m. for our Christmas Eve service!

Upcoming Events!

- **December 24** – TONIGHT! 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
- **January 6** – Saturday, 10 am – Taking down the greens
- **February 18** – Lady Terps Basketball Game, 1 pm (contact Bob Hardy for tickets)

*Offering to be sent to
Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

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