

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020 (Real Church Virtual)



Special Opening Prelude (from 2017 Concert) & Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection

P: Loving and forgiving God,

C: **we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

P: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, ✠ comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Savior of the Nations, Come

Verse 1

Savior of the nations, come; virgin's son, make here your home. Marvel now, O heav'n and earth: God has chosen such a birth.

Verse 2

Not by human flesh and blood, but the mystic Breath of God, was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of woman, blossom fresh.

Verse 3

Wondrous birth—O wondrous child—from his throne, a virgin mild! Very God, and Mary's son eager now his race to run!

Verse 4

From God's heart the Savior speeds, back to God his pathway leads; out to vanquish death's command, back to reign at God's right hand.

Verse 5

Now your manger, shining bright, hallows night with newborn light. Night cannot this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.

Verse 6

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word! To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally!

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 the Day

A: Let us pray together,

C: 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.

First Reading: Romans 16:25-27

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.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Psalmody: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, ⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.**

⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵²**casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.**

⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,**

⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. 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 this gospel.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

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.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon – Pastor Paul

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of Heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace

Interlude ("Lo, How a Rose" with Special Musical Ensemble)

Lord's Prayer

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.

Final Blessing

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.**

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)

Verse 1

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King. Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Verse 2

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns; let all their songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Chorus

Joy, unspeakable joy! An overflowing well; no tongue can tell! Joy, unspeakable joy! It rises in my soul, never lets me go!

Verse 3

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love!

Chorus

Joy, unspeakable joy! An overflowing well; no tongue can tell! Joy, unspeakable joy! It rises in my soul, never lets me go!

The outdoor **"Shooting STAR Dispenser"** at BLC is now full with several paper publications, including the December STAR and the current week's worship folder/bulletin. If you would like a copy of a DVD, please contact the church and one will be produced for you.

Calling all Knitters!!: There is an overabundance of yarn skeins in the bin under the mailboxes in the narthex. PLEASE feel free to grab some to make hats, mittens, prayer shawls, etc.! The yarn is sorted according to kind, so you can be sure to find something appropriate for whatever project you have in mind. Questions? Call Betty R. (947-1013)

Christ in Our Home Devotionals for January/February/March. They can be picked up at the name tag table on Sunday mornings, from the STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. The newest *Living Lutheran* magazine is also available in the same locations.

The daughter of one of our members, Kathi Ivany-Mort, is in need of a vehicle. She is a single parent of three children, two of which have special needs. She has limited funds but would be open to a fair price and/or payment plan if desired. If you have a vehicle that would seat five people and possibly AWD or 4WD, please contact Kathi on her cell at 231-313-1647 or Kathi's husband, Jef Mort, at their home phone 231-929-4911.

From Kathi Ivany: "Praise the Lord! And a special thank you to Margo for your kind and generous gift for my daughter! Erica and her family can certainly use it at this time of the year....I have recently discovered that Erica is trying to save money for an internet connection, so that her children can receive an "inter-face connection" with their schools."

As an aside, an internet company in Rapid City is charging very high fees now to install internet in homes, and though Erica has tried to contest this, it looks like this is the reality these days. Continued prayers for all those trying to stay connected in these challenging times. - Pr. Paul

A big thank you to those who have turned in Oleson's receipts. We just received a check from them for \$266.87. Please continue saving your Oleson's receipts for Bethlehem.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to Pastor Paul at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org or Sharon at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!

"Zoom Bible Study" will take a Christmas break on Dec 23rd and Dec 30th. We will resume on Jan 6th, gathering via Zoom is going strong each Wednesday from noon until about 1:15pm, and each week we are having great conversation and fellowship. We are using the Augsburg Fortress study of two of Paul's letters: 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Please contact Pr. Paul if you are interested in joining.

Administrative Assistant Needed at Father Fred: This is a full-time Administrative Assistant position with benefits. The person filling this role must be flexible, able to function well in a highly stimulating environment, respond to interruptions as they occur and work independently to accomplish assigned tasks. The overall function of this role is to provide organizational, clerical and Executive level support.

Entry Requirements:

Education: Minimum two yr. college degree required

Experience: Three to five years of administrative/executive assistant level experience in a professional environment / Previous accounting experience preferred /Advanced level knowledge of Microsoft Office programs / Familiarity with QuickBooks preferred

More details visit fatherfred.org

Send Resume to Executive Director, Candice Hamel chamel@fatherfred.org

This is a year when we cannot visit many of our members to bless them with our Christmas carols. Instead please pull out your BLC directory and take a moment to make a phone call to one or two of them or send a Christmas card to share a moment of joy with them. Not sure who needs a call or card? How about you choose members whose last name is closest in the alphabet to your own?

List of Home Bound Members of BLC 2020
BLC = Directory

Marlene Baesch BLC

Marinan Bradford in Traverse Manor on Draka Rd. Traverse City, MI

Carol Collins – Burcham Assisted Living 2700 Burcham Dr. East Lansing, MI 48823

Brenda Denoyer at home BLC

Richard Fernholz BLC

Jo Hasse she is in French Manor BLC

Corinne Hill BLC

Christian Stretlien and Julie LaPeer 14720 Mc Coll Ave. Thompsonville, MI 49683

Tom and Lee Miller BLC

Marilyn Skay BLC

Nancy Smith BLC

Lois Stretlien (Jan's sister in-law) in Traverse Manor Room #24

Ellie Tacke BLC

Inge Thomas BLC

Priscilla Thomas @ Samaritas Assisted Living 4354 Mt. Hope Rd. Williamsburg MI 49690 BLC

Jan and Butch Waisanen BLC

Dee and Bill Springer Boardman Lake Glens 1400 Brigadoon Ct. TC 49684 BLC

Marjorie Whitney in Traverse Manor on Draka Rd. Traverse City, MI BLC