

Saint Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield

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The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24th 2023

Color of the Day: BLUE-the color of the sky-helps convey that powerful message. Our Christian faith rests on the hope that Christ, who came in history assuming our flesh, will also return on the last day of time from that same blue sky he ascended long ago. Advent, a preparatory time of waiting and watching, communicates the message of hope.

Opening Hymn #386 – Now Sing WE, Now Rejoice

Confession and Absolution. Page 184

Service of the Word

Introit Page 186

Ps. 19:4c, 5-6; antiphon: Is.45:8a,b

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down | righteousness,*

let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may | bear fruit.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.*

In them he has set a tent | for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his | chamber,*

and, like a strong man, runs its | course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the | end of them,*

and there is nothing hidden | from its heat.

Glorify be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down | righteousness,*

let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may | bear fruit.

Kyrie. Page 186

Gloria In Excelsis (Omitted during Advent) Page 187

Salutation & Collect of the Day. Page 189

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Old Testament Reading. Page 190

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." ³And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you." ⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵"Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell 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 for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges 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, that you should 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 dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men 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.

¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'"

Gradual Page 190

Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:26,alt.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of | Zion.*

Shout aloud, O daughter of Je- | rusalem.

Behold, your king is com- | ing to you,*

righteous and having sal- | vation.

Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the Lord.*

From the house of the Lord we | bless you.

Epistle Reading Page 190

Romans 16:25–27

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Choral Anthem

Alleluia Page 190

Holy Gospel Page 190

Luke 1:26–38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Creed Page 191/192

Children’s Message

Hymn of the Day #357 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

The Sermon To God Be Glory ~ Romans 1:1-7

Introduction

The word “mystery” _____:

The word “kerygma” _____:

The Revelation of the Mystery

For too many _____:

The illustration of _____:

The mystery has been given through _____:

Adam and Eve _____:

The mystery is made know through _____:

God’s Promise in Sending Christ

Jesus came _____:

Jesus still comes _____:

Our Lord continues to come to _____:

What Does This Mean?

There is the mystery of _____:

The mystery is revealed every time _____:

The mystery is revealed in _____:

The mystery is revealed in _____:

The mystery is revealed in _____:

In simple terms _____:

Other Notes or Questions for Pastor:

Offertory Page 192

Offering & Prayer of the Church Page 193

Our First Fruits & Tithes are our regular, top priority, proportionate, grateful gifts to the Lord for the work of the Gospel. Our Offerings are special gifts for special causes over and above our tithes. This is an act of worship for members and friends of St. Matthew who are moved by God's love to respond to the Gospel. Guests should not feel obligated to participate.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface Page 194

P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus Page 195

Lord’s Prayer Page 196

The Words of Our Lord & Pax Domini Page 197

Agnus Dei. Page 198

Distribution Page 199

Before partaking of the Lord's Supper, we ask that you read our communion statement on the pew insert behind the Bible. Thank you.

Distribution Hymns #506 – Glory Be to God the Father
#353 – Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring
#336 - Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

Nunc Dimittis. Page 199

Thanksgiving Page 200

Salutation and Benedicamus. Page 201

Benediction Page 202

Closing Hymn #343 – Prepare the Royal Highway