



ADVENT IV

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Raleigh, NC

December 19, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.

THE GATHERING

The people gather. First gong, enter into silence. Second gong, please stand.

Opening (Prepare Ye)

A single Cantor chants the opening Versicle 3X and the congregation responds as the Altar Party gathers near the Advent Wreath

Cantor Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord
People ***Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord***

Presider Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (*James 5:7-10*)

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath—Theme: Love (The Blessing of Home)

The appointed leaders approach the Advent Wreath and begin with the following:

Reader Sometimes when we are trying something new, or when we are facing a difficult decision, or when we want to celebrate something, or when we just feel lost and alone and uncertain about life, the universe and everything, we need a blessing. We don't always think of it that way, or word it like that. We say we need advice, or support, or companions, or someone to come along beside and lift us up again so we can see more than the tops of our shoes. We seek a blessing.

People **For many of us, we go home; we ask mothers; we talk to fathers, or brothers and sisters, close friends, those we grew up with, those who know us best. We want them alongside; we want to be in their presence. Somehow, we know that being there,**

being home, will make all things better. Maybe it won't be fixed, or solved, or wished away, but at least we won't be alone. We seek a blessing.

Reader Mary, faced with an incomprehensible burden and gift, ran to Cousin Elizabeth's house, looking for someone who knew a little of what she was going through, looking for a place to hide until the reality of her condition could become something real. And she received a blessing. The prophet Micah spoke of a blessing coming to an unexpected place, an unassuming town. Yet by God's grace would become the means through which God would bless the whole world. Bethlehem, the little town of blessing. We seek a blessing.

(All four candles are lit on the Advent wreath)

Reader We light these candles, the candle of hope, of peace, of joy and of today, love, as a sign that we know blessing and we know waiting for blessing to be felt and lived. We light these candles as a sign that we still seek a blessing. It's time to go home.
(Source: adapted, Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy 2021, Derek Weber)

Acclamation

Presider Blessed is our God, now and forever, unto the ages of ages.
People **Amen! Glory to God! Glory to God!**

Gloria

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

Micah 5:1-5

Now you are walled around with a wall; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel upon the cheek. But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. **Thanks be to God.**

Canticle 15 (The Song of Mary) *Magnificat* in unison

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

Hebrews 10:1-10

Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshippers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).'

When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will* that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. **Thanks be to God.**

✦ The Holy Gospel Luke 1:39-55

The holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Christ.**

The Homily A marked period of silence follows the Homily.

The 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 the People

May our hearts leap for joy as we again assemble in prayer to await the Lord's coming. With Mary may our souls proclaim God's greatness as we say: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the church: As the celebration of your incarnation draws near, we remember the many ways your revelation is lifted up in the world. We pray for our sisters and brothers in Christ, praying as we do today, in house churches in China, in Black storefronts in urban America, in white suburbs of the Bible belt, on Indian reservations in rural areas, in Black townships in South Africa, in indigenous churches of the Caribbean, in the barrios of Latin America, in Europe among the foreign workers, in our own

communities among the infirm, the homeless, and the dying. Wherever the church is found on the frontiers of mission and service, may your ministry be strengthened and our vision of ministry be stretched. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For this assembly of St. Mark's: May we be enriched by our diversity and dedicated to preparing leadership for the future, acknowledging our present gifts, and remembering those who in the past birthed us into faith. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the young Marys and Josephs in our society, and for newborn children, especially those undernourished and without parental love and care: May all be given a home and an atmosphere of home-making. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For an end to violence, oppression, and injustice: As you lead us, Lord, from darkness to light, make us children of the light. May we join with Mary's song that we may be among those who exalt the lowly and fill the hungry with good things, routing out the proud of heart and drawing courage from the power of your arm. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our own spirit: With Mary may our hearts be magnified, made much bigger than we image them to be. May the new breath of Advent stir in us such ardor that we extend ourselves much more than we thought possible. May we like Mary set out across the barren country without fear, to visit the Elizabeths in our lives. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For healing among all those who suffer including: **Rudolph McEwan, Ryoko Roberts, Beth Plumeri, Leah Underwood, Becky Toole, David Robbins, Sarah Robbins, Valerie Aguirre, Vickie LoMonte, Judy Wray, David Myher, Elayne Karickoff, Ruth Mufandaedza, Lee Witcher, Audrey Witcher, Deanna Hill, Sophia Vaughan Morning, Mary Mainwaring, Katie Critcher, Dave Bowman, Denise Davis, Carmen Reeve, James Barber, Celia Nail, Betty Johnson, William Nail, Ginny Barber, Janice Fowlkes, Harriet Banner, Susan Tobie, Hugh Stohler and Rpaol Smith.** Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For **Dirk Hart** (21st) who celebrates a birthday this week. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who die violent deaths rooted in racism, misogyny and homophobia and for those who mourn them. Lord, in your mercy, **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who died in the Philippines in the aftermath of Typhoon Rai. Lord, in your mercy, **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who died in the devastating tornadoes in Kentucky and other parts of the Midwest and for those still in peril. Lord, in your mercy, **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the 800,000 citizens in this country and the millions across the globe who have died from COVID-19 and for those who mourn them. Lord, in your mercy, **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have died in the peace of Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Deacon For the forgiveness of our sins; for the times we have failed to love, for the moments when we didn't speak out against injustice and for our complicitness in oppressive and dehumanizing systems. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The People may kneel or bow.

God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.

The Presider offers the absolution

The Exchange of Peace

The peace of Christ be always with you. **And also with you.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Gathering of Tithes and Offerings

Song: O come, O come Emmanuel (sung a' Capella)

O Come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

[Refrain] Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go. [Refrain]

O come, O come thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the Law, in cloud and majesty and awe. [Refrain]

O come, thou Branch of Jesse's tree, free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust thy mighty power to save, and give them victory o'er the grave. [Refrain]

O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. [Refrain]

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. [Refrain]

O come, Desire of nations bind, in one the hearts of humankind;
bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace. [Refrain]

O Come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. [Refrain]

The Great Thanksgiving

Presider: All things come from you, O God.

People: **And of your own have we given you.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing (say):

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made. In the fullness of time bring us, with [and] all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Presider breaks the consecrated bread also known as 'The Fraction'.

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. **Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

Please remain masked during the distribution of Communion. You may wish to hold your communion bread/wafer until the end of distribution, so we may all commune together.

Prayer after Communion

The people stand.

Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE SENDING

An Advent Blessing

The people stand. (Romans 16:25-27)

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to the gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but 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.

To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever!

And the blessing of God Almighty: the Father, the Son, and the only Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Deacon Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The Rev. Tyrone Fowlkes, Presider



St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 1725 N. New Hope Road, Raleigh, NC, 27604 Phone: (919) 231-6767

Website: www.stmarks-ral.org, Rector: The Rev. Tyrone Fowlkes, Rector's Email: tfowlkes@stmarks-ral.org