



Sunday, December 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Introduction

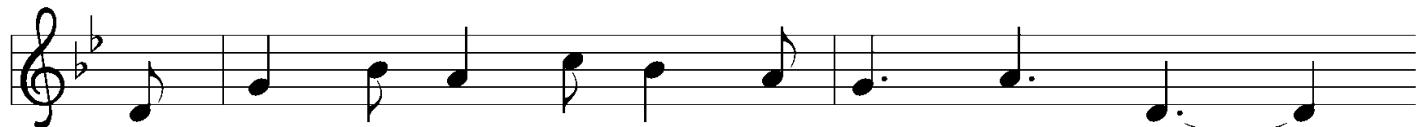
Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

Prelude... "Shine Jesus Shine"

Announcements

Preparation for Worship – Silent Prayer

Gathering Hymn. "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"



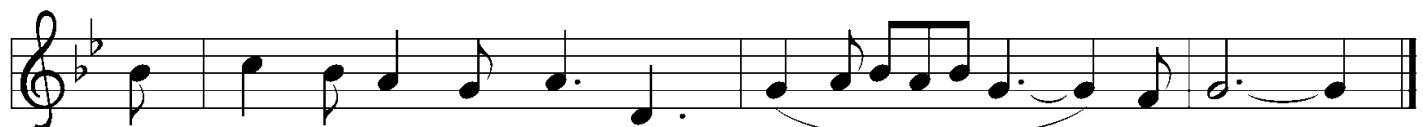
1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



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

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924

Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, [☩] one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

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 is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

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.

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.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

God With Us, Emmanuel

A Candle Lighting Ceremony for Advent

Candle Lighting

Today we light four candles. The first candle reminds us of our hope in knowing Jesus as our Wonderful Counselor. The second candle reminds us of our joy in proclaiming Christ as our Mighty God. The third candle grants us comfort knowing that Jesus is our Prince of Peace. We light the fourth candle to remind us that Jesus is our Everlasting Father. In a world of change, mobility and transition, we affirm that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Responsive Litany—HE WILL BE CALLED EVERLASTING FATHER

P: During Advent we wait for the coming Savior who is our Everlasting Father.

C: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

P: During Advent we look to the One who knows our deepest thoughts.

C: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

P: During Advent we look to the One who cares for our deepest needs.

C: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

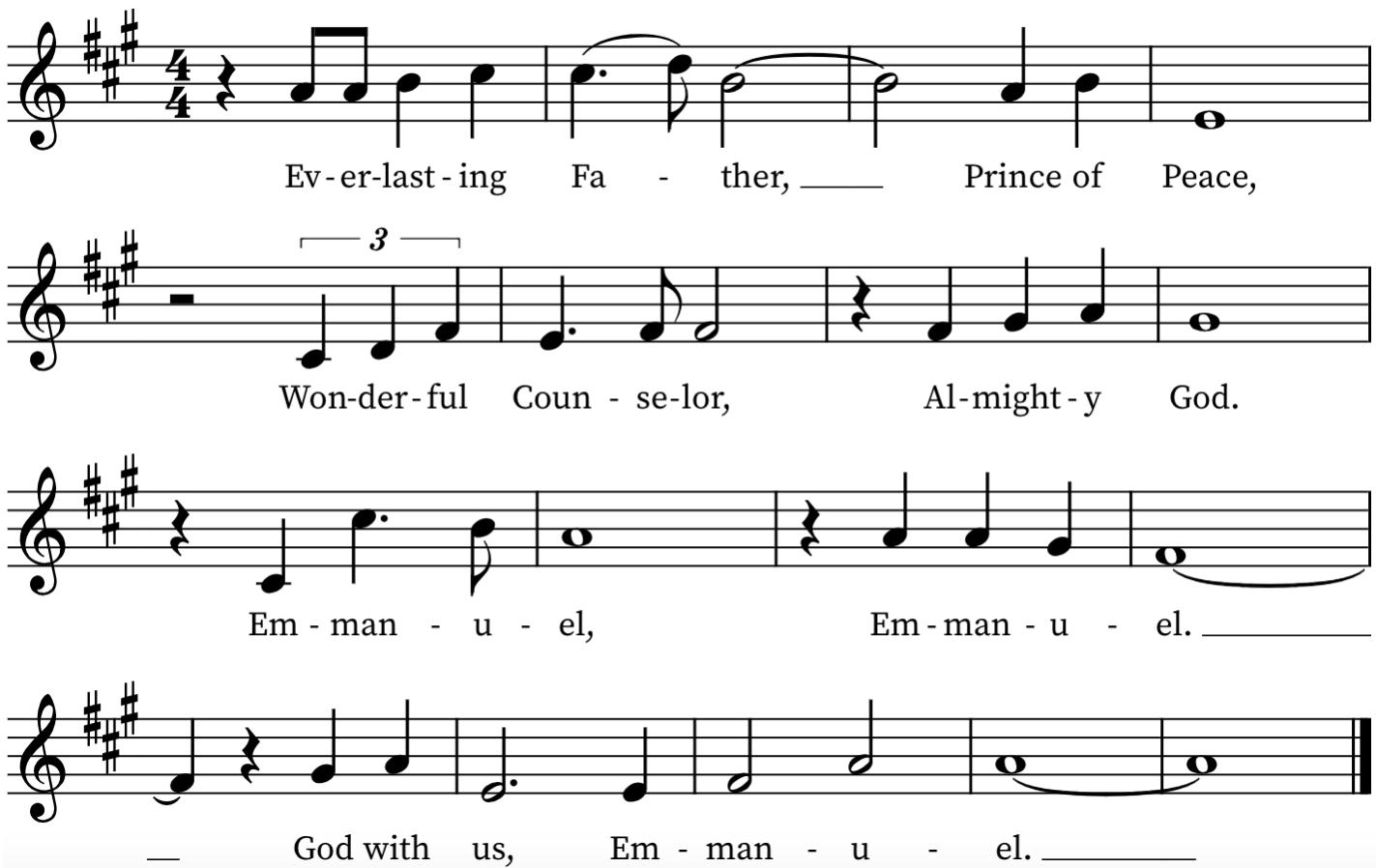
P: During Advent we look to the One who knows our most pressing concerns.

C: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

P: During Advent we look to the One who knows our innermost being.

C: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Congregation:



Ever-lasting Father, Prince of Peace,
Wonder-ful Coun - se-lor, Al-might - y God.
Em - man - u - el, Em - man - u - el.
— God with us, Em - man - u - el.

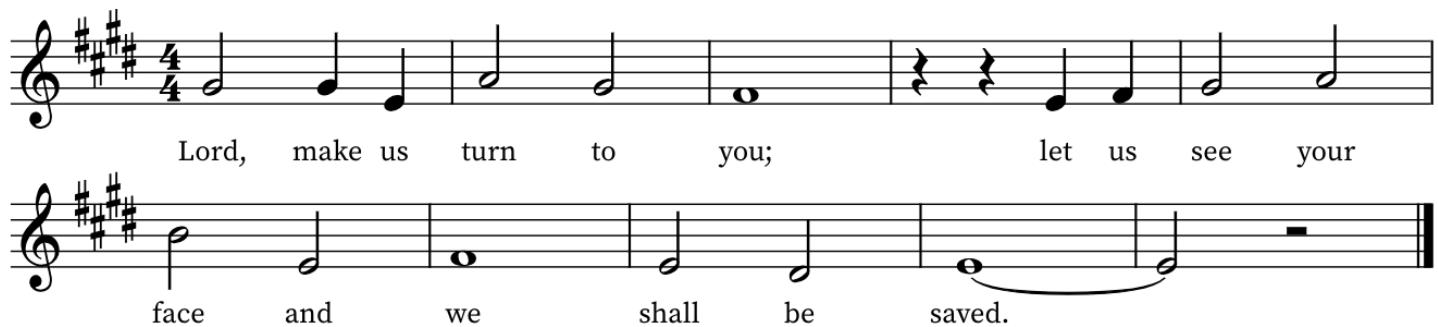
Closing Prayer

Gracious Lord, as we continue our Advent journey, we acknowledge that very little in our world stays the same. Thank you for being our Everlasting Father, who is eternally present with us. We pray this in the name of Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Psalm 80 Lord Make Us Turn to You

Refrain



Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your
face and we shall be saved.

2-3 O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse your power, and come to save us.

Refrain.

15-16 Once again, O LORD of hosts, look down [look down] from heaven, and see; take care of this vine, and protect what your right hand has planted the son of man whom you yourself made strong. Refrain.

18-19 May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself made strong, Then we will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name. Refrain.

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

HERE ENDS THE READING.

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

HERE ENDS THE READING.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves." Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Sermon Hymn..... "There's a Voice in the Wilderness"

1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a
2 O Je - ru - sa - lem, her - ald good tid - ings, as -
3 But the word of our Sav - ior is faith - ful, the

call from the ways un - tred: Pre - pare in the des - ert a
cend to the heights and sing! Pro - claim to a des - o - late
arm of our God is strong, who stands in the midst of the

high - way, a high - way for our God!
peo - ple the com - ing of their king.
na - tions and soon will right the wrong.

The val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the
Like flow'rs of the field we per - ish, like
Lord, feed your flock like a shep - herd, the

loft - y hills brought low; make straight all the crook - ed
grass our works de - cay; the pow'r and the pomp of
lambs so gent - ly hold; in pas - tures of peace now

plac - - es where God, our God, may go!
na - - tions shall pass like a dream a - way.
lead them, and bring them to to your fold.

Text: James Lewis Milligan, 1876-1961, alt.
Music: ASCENSION, Henry Hugh Bancroft, 1904-1988
Music © Estate of Eldred Bancroft. B. Burrows, Executor.

The 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 power of 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 Intercession

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God,
trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the
whole creation.

A brief silence.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your
arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians,
poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among
us.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*We pray especially for Amanda, Jeff, Eric, Barbara, Lizzy, Christi, Debbie, Adrian, Larry, Katie, Angelika, Jenna, Dave, Joy, Frank, Kyle, Tyler, John, Tom, Robert, Pat, Linda, Owen, Barbara, Cherrie, Gene, Shirley, Jana, Kathie, Del, Regan, Geri, Kristen, Janet, Bob, Michael, Peter, Kelly and Brian*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you all.
And also with you.

Offering

Offering Song... "All Hail King Jesus/Lord I Lift Your Name On High"

Offering Prayer

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

Thanksgiving at the Table

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The 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.

Distribution

We will be using the intinction method for distribution. You will be handed bread and asked to dip the bread in the chalice. Gluten-free bread and grape juice are available. Please make your way forward by the center aisle, returning down the side. If mobility is a problem for you, please notify an usher and you will be served at your seat.

Invitation to Communion

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Communion Song... "The Power Of Your Love"

Post Communion Prayer

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Blessing

May God who comes among us, Father, ⁺ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn..... "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ring bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.