

Church of the Divine Love

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 19, 2021

10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#56 – O come, O come, Emmanuel vs.7&8**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Kyrie page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Micah 5:2-5a**

Canticle 15 – The Song of Mary

Second Lesson: **Hebrews 10:5-10**

Gradual Hymn **#54 – Savior of the nations, come!**

Gospel: **Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#265 – The angel Gabriel from heaven came**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

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|---|----------|
| Eucharistic Prayer C | page 369 |
| Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) | page 362 |
| The Lord's Prayer | page 364 |
| The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer | page 337 |
| The Communion of the People | |
| Communion Hymn – #267 – Praise we the Lord this day vs.1-3 | |
| Post Communion Prayer | page 365 |
| Prayer for Peace – on insert | |
| Prayer of St. Francis | page 833 |
| Dismissal Hymn #66 – Come, thou long expected Jesus | |

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,
Lay my life before you,
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions and glory, now and for ever. Amen

Sermon Sunday December 19, 2021

Micah 5: 2-5a; Canticle 3 or 15; Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45, (46-55).

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

“Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

When I look at the various situations and circumstances of my life, the joys and sorrows, the successes and failures, the hopes and the disappointments, the struggles, and the accomplishments, I so want to find hidden within them a fulfillment of something spoken to me by the Lord. I don't think I'm alone in that. I don't think I am all that different from you or anyone else. I think we all want that, even if we don't know it. We want to believe.

We want to believe that our life and existence are more than our circumstances. We want to discover a value and meaning that is lasting and not situational. We want to know and experience God is with us. We long for something beyond the circumstances. It's not about denying or ignoring our circumstances. It's about believing through the circumstances rather than in the circumstances. It is a different way of believing than what we are used to.

Most of the time we take the facts of a situation, as we see them, and, using reason, come to our own conclusion. That's our usual way of believing. It's characterized by rational thought, deductive analysis, and scientific thinking. We allow the circumstances of our lives to determine or at least strongly influence what we believe about God, the world, others, and ourselves. In that regard, tragedy and violence in our nation and world will lead some to believe that evil has overcome good. An ancient Mayan calendar caused some to believe the world would end two days ago. The hardships of life can cause us to believe we are victims, entitled, and justified in our anger and resentment. Successes and

accomplishments can make one believe he or she is blessed, fortunate, more deserving, or better than another. Some whose prayer goes unanswered believe God is absent, not listening, or just doesn't care.

At the sound of Mary's greeting Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. She recognizes and greets more than her younger cousin. She embraces the divinity carried inside Mary. She recognizes Mary as the mother of her Lord. On this day Elizabeth greets salvation. At the sound of Mary's greeting John, the forerunner, leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb – the unborn prophet greeting the unborn Messiah. Together Elizabeth and John, by their greeting, proclaim that the time of our salvation is approaching. In many ways our own lives are a series of greetings, one after another. Every day we greet one another, family, friends, colleagues, strangers, enemies, and those in need. Every one of those greetings is pregnant with new life and the possibilities for love, compassion, forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, joy, beauty, wholeness, and holiness. In other words, the greetings of our lives are pregnant with salvation.

Today, some will hear about a young, unmarried, pregnant girl who claims that she saw and spoke with an angel, that she is a virgin, and that her pregnancy is an act of God, and believe the story is simply not true. After all virginity and pregnancy are mutually exclusive. Logic, reason, and human biology tell us so. Others will believe the story is only symbol or metaphor and, therefore, not real, and not true. What if, however, we really believed God is uniquely present and active in the circumstances of our lives, speaking a word? What if we truly believed there would be a fulfillment of the word spoken? What if instead of allowing the circumstances to determine what we believe we allowed our believing to reinterpret the circumstances?

That would be blessed believing, Elizabeth and Mary type of believing. Neither one should be nor could be pregnant. One is too old. One is too young. One is barren. One is a virgin. Yet, both are pregnant. Neither Elizabeth nor Mary allowed the circumstances of her life to define who she was or limit who she might become. Believing for them is not so much about what they see but how they see. Each one believed she was more than the circumstances of her life. Elizabeth believed she was more than just a barren, childless, old woman. Mary refused to accept that she was a no-one, another scandalous woman, but believed that she was the mother of the Holy One.

Both women saw, hidden within their particular situation, a deeper meaning, and a new life. They believed through the circumstances of their lives. Each one trusted that the God of the impossible was somehow in the circumstances reshaping, transforming, and fulfilling her very existence. That's why Elizabeth says, "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord. "Who is the "she" of whom Elizabeth speaks? To whom are her words directed? Just a few verses earlier Elizabeth said to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Now Elizabeth says, "Blessed is she who believed." It is a subtle but significant shift, from "you" to "she." This is not only about Mary. It is about Elizabeth herself. It is about you and me. It is about anyone who is willing to believe, not in, but through the circumstances of his or her life. Elizabeth is speaking about the womb of humanity, the receptive, creative, and generative parts of our lives. The one who believes, conceives and bears the Word of God. There has been a fulfillment of the word spoken and that one declares God's works through the circumstances of his or her life.

It is always easier to reason than it is to really believe. It takes courage, Elizabeth, and Mary kind of courage, to not let the circumstances of our life determine our believing. It means setting aside our

usual way of thinking and understanding, setting aside what is logical and makes sense, and accepting and entrusting ourselves to a mystery that is bigger than us, our understanding, and even our faith.

That kind of believing cannot be limited by what is reasonable, explainable, or even acceptable. It trusts that in every moment of every circumstance the word of God is being fulfilled. That kind of believing impregnates our lives and world with hope, possibilities, and expectations beyond what is factually true, historically accurate, and objectively verifiable. That kind of believing means our life and world are larger than the circumstances in which we live. The bigger our life and world are, the more room we offer God. That kind of believing blesses and in the moment of blessing our soul magnifies the Lord and our spirit rejoices in God our savior. **Amen.**

Masks are required during the service.

4 ADVENT 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE IS OPEN FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

MONDAY 8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE
8:00 PM AA MEETING

CHRISTMAS EVE 7:00 PM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

CHRISTMAS DAY 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

4 ADVENT 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

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| Girard Bishop | Chrissy Neville | Bob Curley |
| Nathan Treadwell | John Loubengeiger | Dorothy |
| Chris Dickson | Kate Jones | Tricia Oretle |
| Michael Echevarria | John Rocco | Robert Sweat |
| Martinisi Family | Michael & Family | Warren |
| Charlotte H. | Bernie Walther | Sylvia |
| Mo (Rachael) | Bill Conklin Sr. | Laura |
| Anthony Paribello | Barbara Curran | Taylor |
| Ciara | Gabriel | Aidan |
| Elodie | Del | Julia |
| Christopher & Family | Victims of Natural Disasters | Tony |
| People of Haiti & Missionaries who were Kidnapped | | |

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen