

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

Isaiah 7:10-15 (off lect)

Randy Foster

While the dating of the events noted in this section of Isaiah is unclear, here Isaiah is speaking to the king of Judah. Ahaz is the target of a coup attempt from Syria and Ephraim. In the previous section of the chapter God assures Ahaz that the coup will fail. In today's reading God invites Ahaz to take hold of faith, offering him the opportunity to receive a sign of God's promise. When Ahaz refuses, God himself offers the sign through the coming of a son, who will be the assurance that "God is with us".

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹² But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Luke 1:39-55

Rosemary Dawson

This passage opens with Mary's visit to Elizabeth. It joins two longer stories of the annunciations and births of both John and Jesus. It accents the similarities, differences and relationship between the two sons. Here Luke is offering a historical recollection and a theological reflection that witnesses to the sovereignty of God. Both Elizabeth's blessing and Mary's song are inspired by the Holy Spirit and joyfully proclaim God's goodness and holy purposes.

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

***Hymn**

Caroling

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

We sing your praises today, O God, for your faithfulness, your goodness and your righteousness. We thank you for sending us a Savior in Jesus Christ, and for calling us and empowering us to share in your great work of grace. O God, as we sing with joy, we also want to be faithful in our service to your world, and so we come asking for your guidance and blessing.

We pray for your church and for this congregation. May the hope of Advent and the assurance of Christmas be our confidence and strength. May we live as witnesses to your salvation and proclaim your glory to all people, through the words we speak and that works we perform.

We pray for our world and its leaders. May they discover the true source of peace for this world and labor in courage and hope to establish your justice for all peoples. We also pray for all who are suffering today. May the ill know your healing touch, the mourning your comforting presence, and the needy your generous aid. We especially lift up... and we thank you for...

We praise you and thank you, wondrous God, for all your mercy to us through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Choral Response

Remember Me

Offering

Today we rejoice in the goodness of God known to us in the coming of Christ. We are invited to make that truth known to all peoples by share our many blessings with those who need it most. Let us dedicate our offerings with joy.

Loving God, for your mercy and grace to us we give you our deepest thanks and praise. In response to your extravagant love in Jesus Christ, we give you these tokens of love. Use our gifts and our lives to make your good news known throughout the world. Amen.

Doxology

(choose the one that is best for your faith)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below,
praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God for all that Love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen

***Hymn**

Caroling

***Common Commission**

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*** Benediction**

Go now into the world

with your souls magnifying the Lord,
and your spirits rejoicing in God our Savior. (Luke 1:46, 47)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Postlude “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” Rowland H. Pritchard, arr. by Mark Hayes

music provided by Chris Harris and Lynne Walker