

4th Sunday of Advent

December 19, 2021

God's
Presence
brings joy



Baruch 5:1-9



MUHLENBERG
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ DECEMBER 19, 2021

WELCOME

We welcome you in the name of Christ. **We love welcoming guests/visitors** and encourage you to complete one of the blue cards in the pew rack and place it in the offering basket, or **scan this QR Code** with your smart phone to complete the visitor card digitally. We have a gift for you at our Welcome Desk – please stop by after worship. You are invited to join in all parts of worship. Everything you need is printed in this worship booklet. All who desire to receive Holy Communion are welcome at the table. If you do not wish to receive, you are still welcome! For instructions on how to receive the bread and wine, see the Communion section later in this booklet. Portions of worship in bold print are to be spoken by the whole congregation. We stand for portions of our worship service. **Please feel free to remain seated, if you prefer.**



HEALTH AND SAFETY

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain measures are in place for our time of worship to be as safe and healthy as possible. **Well-fitted masks will be required for all in-person worshippers, regardless of vaccination status.** Masks are a way we protect those around us, and we wish to create a worship space that is as safe as it can be for those under 5 who cannot be vaccinated yet. Physical distancing will be in place in the sanctuary with every other row in use. For the first part of our worship, music will be sung by the choir only. The congregation will join in singing our final hymn. Our choir members will be masked, and all musicians have provided proof of vaccination.

OUR WORSHIP

Our worship is rooted in the ancient pattern of the church – gathering, word, meal, sending. The shape of this liturgy and much of the actual words/prayers come directly from scripture. Though we make seasonal shifts, the constancy of our worship reflects God’s constant love and promises through forgiveness, scripture, and the sacraments of baptism and communion. Following this liturgical pattern, as well as the Narrative Lectionary (a four-year cycle of scripture readings in biblical order), we are connected through our worship with Christians around the world and throughout time. *For details, see “About Our Worship” on the last page.*

Worship will be live-streamed at 11:00 am. Digital ministry is an essential part of our community with the Wellstream service at 11:00 am allowing those at home to worship alongside our gathered community for a service of Holy Communion. The cameras will be primarily focused on our worship leaders and offer some wide-angle views of the sanctuary. If you have questions or concerns about appearing on camera, contact Pastor Alex or Communication Minister Christian Perritt (perritt@muhlenberglutheran.org).

OTHER NOTES

- **Amplification devices** for the hearing impaired are available from ushers or at the Welcome Desk.
- A **restroom** is located at the north end of the Gathering Area (additional restrooms downstairs).

MUHLENBERG LUTHERAN CHURCH: A WELLSPRING OF GOD’S GRACE

Open ✝ Authentic ✝ Relational ✝ Serving

Pastor Lauren Eanes

Pastor Alex Zuber

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Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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WORSHIP WITH HOLY COMMUNION

GATHERING

We come from our homes, our labor, our struggles, and our joys – which we share in fellowship as a Christian community. We are gathered together as God’s people to worship. In this first part of our worship, we share together honestly – our sins in confession, our joy in forgiveness.

WELCOME AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH *Today the wreath is lit by Congregation Council.*

PRELUDE

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (tune: PICARDY; arr. K. Wissinger)

Gloria Dei Ringers

(We stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The congregation turns and faces the baptismal font.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Christ is with us! Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence for reflection.

God for whom we wait,

in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, is present in this place, and has looked with favor upon you!

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, † our sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy.

God strengthens you anew, with God’s own presence, to follow the way of peace.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry *verses 1, 2, & 5 (sung by cantor)*

PUER NOBIS

(if you would like to follow along, this is hymn # 249)

The congregation turns and faces the cross as the procession approaches the altar, reminding us that Christ leads us into the presence and love of God.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

(We sit)

KYRIE (sung by cantor)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of joy, remember us in your love and clothe us with the robe of righteousness that comes only from you. Receive our gratitude and praise for all your holy works. **Amen.**

WORD

The first half of our liturgy focuses on the Word of God through the reading of scripture and preaching. The pattern of reading, singing, reading, singing is an ancient one, which comes from Christianity's roots in Jewish synagogue worship.

FIRST READING ~ Baruch 5:1-9

¹Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.

²Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;

³for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven.

⁴For God will give you evermore the name,

"Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

⁵Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;

look toward the east,

and see your children gathered from west and east

at the word of the Holy One,

rejoicing that God has remembered them.

⁶For they went out from you on foot,

led away by their enemies;

but God will bring them back to you,

carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

⁷For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,

so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.

⁸The woods and every fragrant tree
have shaded Israel at God's command.

⁹For God will lead Israel with joy,
in the light of his glory,
with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

The reading concludes:

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 85 *(sung by cantor)*

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

²You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.

³You have withdrawn all your fury
and turned yourself from your wrathful indignation.

⁴Restore us then, O God our Savior;
let your anger depart from us.

⁵Will you be displeased with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger from age to age?

⁶Will you not give us life again,
that your people may rejoice in you?

⁷Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their
hearts to you.

⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.

(We stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(sung by cantor)*

GOSPEL ~ John 1:14

The Holy Gospel according to ... **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the
glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

After the reading:

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

(We sit)

SERMON

Pastor Alex Zuber

Silence for reflection follows.

ANTHEM

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (tune: JEFFERSON; arr. C. Moglebust)

Gloria Dei Ringers

NICENE CREED

Let us confess our faith:

**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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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

After each petition:

. . . Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The Lay Assisting Minister concludes the prayers:

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Have a prayer concern to share? Forms are available in the back cover of each hymnal.

(We stand)

PEACE

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

Maintaining physical distancing, and only making physical contact with members of your own household, the congregation may greet one another with a gesture of peace (i.e., hand over heart, nod, wave, etc.), using these or similar words: “Peace be with you.”

(We sit)

MEAL

In the second half of our liturgy, we gather around the table, following Jesus' invitation. Here in this meal we encounter the risen Lord who gives himself for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening the Body of Christ.

OFFERING

Our offerings are collected and dedicated to our Lord's service. They support the ministries of Christ's church in this congregation, the Virginia Synod, ELCA, and our global mission partners. If you prefer to give online, please visit www.muhenberglutheran.org/give.

The Road to Bethlehem (W. Gross)

Gloria Dei Ringers

(We stand)

OFFERING PRAYER

God of our waiting and watching, **we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way as we seek your presence in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

As the shadows lengthen in this season, and we journey through the transforming night of Advent, we bless you, sheltering God.

We glorify you for the endless, starlit sky, deep with the mystery of your creative labor through all time and space. We praise you for the fertile earth and for the life its darkness holds and births: plants of every variety, animals curled in sleep, humankind you shaped by your own hand. Stay with us, Lord.

Your presence brings hope.

Through the night you led your people into freedom by your presence. At day's end you rained down manna in the wilderness. At sundown your Son brought healing to people in need. In the midday night when Jesus died on the cross, life came forth for all.

Stay with us, Lord.

Your presence brings life.

*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.*

Our hearts burn within us
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Like a mother hen, hold us close through the transforming night. Watch with those who labor, accompany those who long for peaceful sleep, welcome those whose waking will be only in you. Into our deepest night, come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Holy Spirit, make here the body of Christ: in the breaking of the bread, in justice for our broken world, in rest for the weary, come, Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit.

To you, O God, painter of both night and day, guiding star and healing sun, breath of peace and wind of change, be all glory, all honor, all praise through Advent's night unto the coming dawn, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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 forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All who hunger and thirst, come. The table is ready.

(We sit)

COMMUNION

All are welcome to come to the Lord's Table! After the invitation to communion, the ushers will direct each row to come forward to receive the prepackaged communion kit. If you are unable to come forward, signal an usher or raise your hand, and an assisting minister will bring the elements to you.

As the ministers says, "The body and blood of Christ, given and shed for you," you may take the elements and say: "Amen." Then return to your seat to remove your mask and consume the elements. If you need gluten-free and/or non-alcoholic juice communion elements, they are located on a small table at the front. Take one and present it to the pastor for blessing. Please dispose of your communion packaging in the trash can by the doors on your way out.

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Most High God, **your presence has been among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.**

(We stand)

SENDING

Our worship does not end, but continues in the world. In our daily lives we are called to be ministers of God's love and mercy as we live and serve by the power of the risen Christ.

SENDING HYMN

#439 Soon and Very Soon

VERY SOON

(congregation is invited to sing the final hymn)

The congregation turns & faces the cross reminding us that we follow Christ into the world & our daily lives.

~see next page~

Soon and Very Soon



1 Soon and ver - y soon
2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
3 No more dy - in' there,
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King.
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!

Coda after stanza 4



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu -



jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

BLESSING

May God, who gathers us in love,

lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice.

May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves,

lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom.

May God, who fills us with good things,

lead you in pathways of equity and abundance.

The blessing of the holy Trinity, † one God,

be upon you and remain with you forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

God's presence is here and with us on the way! Now, go in peace to live out Christ's love!

We go to be: Open † Authentic † Relational † Serving

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World (arr. B. Ingram)

Gloria Dei Ringers

After worship, Pastor Lauren and Pastor Alex invite you to greet them and each other in the Gathering Area and outside. Please maintain physical distance and be mindful of others' wishes for space.

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICES

PREACHING MINISTER ~ Pastor Alex Zuber

PRESIDING MINISTER ~ Pastor Lauren Eanes

CRUCIFERS **8:30** — Bill Whitmire
11:00 — Sue Koch

LAY ASSISTING **8:30** — Wylie Walton
MINISTERS **11:00** — Robert Alley

LECTORS **8:30** — Susan Gallaher
11:00 — Meg Wightman

USHERS **8:30** — Susan Gallaher, Karen Thomsen
11:00 — Bill Wightman, Alice Wightman

MUSICIANS Elizabeth Williams, Music Minister
Cantors: Mark & Pam Briehl (8:30) and Kathy Thompson (11:00)
Gloria Dei Ringers; Kath Wissinger, Handbell Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license # A-701538, CCLI license # 20104877, and Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License: SAS014720.

REMINDERS AS YOU EXIT THE SANCTUARY

- **Please place your communion packaging in the trash can as you exit the sanctuary.**
- **We encourage you to take *The Chimes* home with you.**

ABOUT OUR WORSHIP...

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS: + All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins, but no one should feel compelled. Both our confession of sin and God's promise of mercy are rooted in our baptism. We come before God recalling our brokenness, but even more God's great grace.

GATHERING HYMN: We sing as the Spirit gathers us for worship and this hymn sets the tone for the day.

KYRIE: The Kyrie is an ancient piece of service liturgy that may date back to the second century. Kyrie Eleison is Greek for "Lord have mercy" and is in reference to both New and Old Testament scriptures which use the same words and pattern.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: The Prayer of the Day collects the themes from today's scripture readings.

READINGS AND PSALM: Liturgy, from the Greek, means "the work of the people." Our worship is designed so we all take part. We are far more than just spectators. The scripture readings follow a three-year cycle, called a lectionary. We are connected with other Christians all over the world, in many denominations, reading the same texts. The Psalms were the original Hymns in Holy Scripture, used by God's people for personal and corporate devotion. They continue to be prayed, sung and read by God's people all over the world as a rich and honest expression of faith. We stand during the gospel because we believe our Lord is present with us in the reading.

HYMN OF THE DAY: This hymn complements the day's scripture readings and sermon.

NICENE & APOSTLES' CREEDS: The creeds (statements of faith) date back to the 4th century and contain the basics of what Christians around the world hold to be true. The use of the non-capitalized word "catholic" means simply worldwide or universal.

PRAYERS: We pray as a community. The assisting minister leads this time to gather the prayers of all, and at his/ her invitation you may add others aloud or silently in your heart.

PEACE: Much more than a pleasant greeting — we do this to proclaim God's promise of peace to one another.

OFFERING: Our offerings are collected and dedicated to our Lord's service. They support the ministries of Christ's church in this congregation, the Virginia Synod, ELCA, and our global mission partners.

OFFERING SONG: This song becomes our prayer as our gifts are collected and dedicated to our Lord's service.

GREAT THANKSGIVING & HOLY, HOLY, HOLY: The Great Thanksgiving is an ancient part of the worship that proclaims our thanks for the gifts of God in the meal. The "Holy, Holy, Holy" echoes the heavenly chorus in Isaiah 6:3 and the crowds of Mark 11:9 as Jesus enters Jerusalem. This reminds us that we are in the presence of a God identified both by holiness and humility. Some will make the sign of the cross at the announcement of God's presence: "Blessed is He..."

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER: Eucharist is the Greek word for thanks. These are the words and actions, the commands and promises of Jesus at the last supper with his disciples as recorded in scripture: 1Cor. 11:23-26, Matt. 26:26-29, Luke 22:15-20.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Jesus taught his disciples this prayer. In this prayer, all our needs and concerns are addressed. See ELW page 1163 for Martin Luther's explanation of this prayer in the small catechism.

COMMUNION: The "last supper" was a meal that Jesus shared with his disciples before his crucifixion. He invited them to share this meal in the future to remember him and he promised to be present in a mysterious, but very real sense. All who desire to participate are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Feel free to remain seated if you prefer.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: We gather once more in song as our worship concludes, and we prepare to take this good news into the world.

BLESSING: In this blessing we are reminded we bear God's name as we depart to live out our baptism, serving our neighbor and spreading the gospel. It reaffirms our mission and reminds us that if we are to be a Wellspring of Grace, we need to be renewed first through Water, Word, and Meal—the means of grace God has given to us.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

2:00 pm Fireside Christmas Eve Service will be an opportunity to gather for worship outside. As Christ's presence warms us on Christmas, we'll gather around the warmth of the fire-pits as we share an abbreviated Christmas Eve liturgy. We'll have the opportunity to hear the Christmas story, share holy communion, and sing *Silent Night* together. Hot cider and cocoa will be available, and you can pick up candles to take home for our live-streamed service at 6:30 pm.

4:30, 6:30 & 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Services will feature a full traditional liturgy, congregational singing of beloved hymns, the proclamation of the birth of Christ, Biblical Storytelling, Holy Communion, and a candlelit singing of *Silent Night*! The 6:30 pm service will be live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube so you can worship digitally wherever you are.

*We recognize that Christmas Eve will be a time where more people are likely to join us for worship and it will be difficult to maintain the same physical distancing that we do on Sunday mornings. Properly fitting masks will be required and our pre-packaged Holy Communion practices will remain the same for in-person worship. It is **strongly** encouraged that you are fully vaccinated before attending worship, and we fully support each family discerning together the best and safest option for worship attendance.*

DECEMBER 26 ~ 10:00 AM SERVICE

Sunday, December 26 will be a continuation of our Christmas celebration! We will have one service of Holy Communion at 10:00 am, with readings and carols proclaiming the birth of our Savior.