

December 19, 2021 – Fourth Sunday in Advent
“Wait Upon The Lord – With Gratitude”

Thought: Zechariah’s waiting days for John the Baptist’s birth were filled with great gratitude for the Lord’s promise about to be fulfilled. In these remaining waiting days before our Savior’s birth, we are ever more grateful for the arrival of the Promised One.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” ...”Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

What does it mean to “live in Gratitude?”

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. Psalm 9:1

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Prayer cares and concerns

Sharing the Peace in Gratitude

P: Living with grateful hearts we offer our peace to each other.
Peace be with you!

C: And also with you!

Call to Worship

A: Wait upon the Lord

C: Wait with patience and gratitude.

A: Wait upon the Lord. That’s what Zechariah did. Then he gave thanks, saying –

C: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.

A: For he has visited and redeemed his people.

C: To guide our feet into the way of peace.

A: Wait upon the Lord.

C: In all things give the gift of love in gratitude for all that God has done.

A: Let us worship the Lord!

Gathering Hymn

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People” ELW #256

<https://youtu.be/119C58F3dnQ>

Comfort, Comfort Now My People – First Church, Plymouth Neb.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Meri Arnold

We light this candle in hope.
We light this candle for peace.
We light this candle in joy!
We light this candle with love.

Let us pray:

L: God of hope God of peace,
God of Joy, and God of love,
Teach us how to love one another
as reflections of your light in the world.

**C: God of promise, God of love, into our darkness come.
Amen.**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

ELW #257 Vs. 6

*O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O sun of justice, now draw near
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

Invocation

Confession and Forgiveness

P: God of all mercy and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:

A: We admit that we have become impatient with ourselves, each other, and sometimes with you. We have turned to our own way and have gone astray from your will. Lost in sin and needing to become strong and courageous, we ask you, O Lord, to forgive our sin cleanse our hearts, and keep us in gratitude, patiently waiting for the promised coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

You are invited to meditate on the fact that though our sin is great, Christ's love is greater.

P: With gratitude and in joy we receive the good news! God sent his Son, the Babe of Bethlehem, to show his infinite love and forgiveness for all people. Your sins are forgiven in the holy name of + Christ who came and indeed, will come again.

C: In gratitude we say, Amen.

Kyrie for Advent

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: Give us patience.

P: Christ, have mercy.

C: Give us patience and peace.

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: Give us patience and peace so we might live in gratitude as we wait.

Hymn of Praise

“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming” ELW# 272 Vss.1&4

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so
bright, amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.*

*O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe; O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:*

Bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of heaven and into endless day.

Prayer of the Day - Gratitude

A: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come.

C: With Elizabeth's leaping child we wish to dance in celebration.

A: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come.

C: With Mary's Spirit-driven voice we wish to sing our happy praises.

A: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come.

C: But our feet are stuck in sins' cement – our voices stifled by sins gag.

A: Remove the hindrance of our sin.

C: So that we will be free to join the party!

A: You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now...

C: and forever. Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

The Word

Old Testament reading – Isaiah 51:2-4

A light to the people

Look to Abraham your father

and to Sarah who bore you;

for he was but one when I called him,

but I blessed him and made him many.

³For the LORD will comfort Zion;

he will comfort all her waste places,

and will make her wilderness like Eden,

her desert like the garden of the LORD;

joy and gladness will be found in her,

thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴Listen to me, my people,

and give heed to me, my nation;

for a teaching will go out from me,

and my justice for a light to the peoples.

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

Psalm/Luke 1:46b-55
My soul magnifies the Lord!

- ⁴⁶ And Mary^[a] 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.
⁵¹ **He has shown strength with his arm;**
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ **he has filled the hungry with good things,**
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ **according to the promise he made to our ancestors,**
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Epistle reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-25
Give thanks in all circumstances

- ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise the words of prophets,^[a] ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound^[b] and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. ²⁵ Beloved,^[c] pray for us.

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

Gospel Acclamation:

P: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

**C: Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.
Hallelujah!**

Holy Gospel – Luke 1:67-79

<https://youtu.be/VE1XDnG4GuM>

Giving light to those who sit in darkness

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

⁶⁷ Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty savior^[a] for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who
hate us.

⁷² Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon^[b] us,

⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

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

Children of God

https://youtu.be/gruHEEa1w_o

Homily – “Gratitude is Attitude”

<https://youtu.be/NdkxCEh4P3w>

Hymn of the Day – “Fling Wide the Door” ELW #259

<https://youtu.be/6eopKn8rkdY>

Fling Wide the Door – Marc Gamble

Nicene Creed – 2nd Article

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.

Prayers of Intercession

P: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God’s presence.

A brief silence.

A: Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church’s gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness (*especially*). Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Offering – A time of thanksgiving as we give gratitude to our Lord!

Offertory Prayer

A: Heavenly Father, you called upon such simple folk to join your holy family – young Mary, quiet Joseph, elderly Elizabeth.

C: Despite their human frailties, you accepted them.

A: Accept now these gifts of ours – flawed as they may be,

C: even as you accepted us into your holy family.

A: Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

“What Feast of Love” ELW#487 Vss. 1&3

*What feast of love is offered here, what banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life, what gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the manna given!*

*What wine of love is offered here, what crimson drink from heaven?
What stream of everlasting life, what precious blood is given?
This, this is Christ the king, the sweetest wine of heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is given!*

Words of Institution

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.

Communion Music – Lillian Pinkston

Post Communion Blessing – Pastor

Post Communion Prayer

A: Mary believed you were growing within her and gave voice to her faith.

C: May we, too, know that you are God.

A: Through the saving power of this holy sacrament you come into our midst.

C: Come still once more! Come quickly, Lord!

A: You are the Lord forevermore

C: Amen.

Benediction – Numbers 6

Sending Hymn

“Go Tell It on the Mountain” ELW#290

<https://youtu.be/C2Sf-luP4mY>

Go Tell It On the Mountain – for King and Country

Dismissal

A: In gratitude we seek more than ourselves as we give love away.

C: Living in God’s love we go to serve!

Postlude