



ADVENT FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 20, 2020 – Ante Communion

Advent is the season during which Christians prepare their hearts to receive their Lord, newborn at Christmas. By prayer and self-examination, by study of our redemptive history, and by service to all those in need, we make straight the way for our Savior Jesus to come into the world and dwell among us.

Today's Lessons trace God's grace from earliest times up through the coming of Archangel Gabriel to a young girl, Mary, to announce that she will be mother to the Son of the Most High, whose kingdom will have no end. Today we listen and respond to what we hear with music and carols.

Advent Bidding Prayer

Dear People of God: In the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger. Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise. But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this city. And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

Opening Hymn

Come Thou, Long Expected Jesus

Acapeldridge

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne. Amen.*

Lesson 1 Jeremiah 31.31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband,[a] says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No

longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Hymn **The Holly and the Ivy** *King's College Cambridge*

*The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown,
of all the trees that are in the wood the holly bears the crown.*

*Refrain: The rising of the sun and the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.*

*The holly bears a blossom, white as the lily flower,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, to be our sweet Savior. [Refrain]*

*The holly bears a berry, as red as any blood,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to do poor sinners good. [Refrain]*

*The holly bears a prickle, as sharp as any thorn,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas day in the morn. [Refrain]*

*The holly bears a bark, as bitter as any gall,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all. [Refrain]*

Lesson 2 Isaiah 7.10-15

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.

Hymn **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear** *Acapeldridge*

*It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.*

*And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!*

*For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.*

Lesson 3**2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Hymn**O Come O Come Emmanuel***Acapeldridge*

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.*

Refrain: Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*O come, thou rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. [Refrain]*

*O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
and drive away the gloomy clouds of night, and pierce the clouds and bring us light. [Refrain]*

Lesson 4**Luke 1:46-55****The Song of Mary***Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Lesson 5 **Romans 16:25-27**

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Hymn **Love Divine, All Loves Excelling** *Gen Conf of LDS*

*Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down:
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.*

*Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest:
take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning, set our hearts at liberty.*

*Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.*

*Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be:
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory, 'til in heav'n we take our place,
'til we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise. Amen.*

Lesson 6 **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Hymn **Angels We Have Heard On High** *Soundiva, Best Classical Music*

*Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.*

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? [Refrain]*

*Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing.
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]*

*See him in a manger laid whom the angels praise above.
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love. [Refrain]*

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Celebrant: Let us pray. Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Confession of Sin: Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that 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. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your name. Amen.

Celebrant Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
 In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We pray together for Christ's presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.
I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart.
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.**

Hymn **Lo He Comes with Clouds Descending** *Lichfield Cathedral Choir*

*Lo! he comes with clouds descending, once for our salvation slain;
thousand, thousand saints attending swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ the Lord returns to reign.*

*Every eye shall now behold him, robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at nought and sold him, pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing, shall the true Messiah see.*

*Those dear tokens of his passion still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation to his ransomed worshipers;
with what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture, gaze we on those glorious scars!*

*Yea, amen! let all adore thee, high on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the power and glory; claim the kingdom for thine own:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.*

Four-part Blessing for Advent

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Music The Lord Bless You and Keep You with a 7-Fold Amen *Acapeldridge*