



ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

Liturgy of the Word

December 20, 2020 10 A.M.

INTROIT

Quia respexit

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent.

For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden;
behold, from henceforth, I will be called blessed.

Words: Luke 1:48 Music: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), *Magnificat*, BWV 243, c1733

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Presider lights the Advent candles and then says the following prayer

Come, O Holy One, as the beloved child, Emmanuel! Soften our hearts and open our arms for your coming, that we may make this a place worthy, warm, kindly, and safe for all your children, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

HYMN

The angel Gabriel from heaven came (265, *The Hymnal 1982*)

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from hea - ven came,
2 "For know a bless - ed Mo - ther thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Ma - ry meek - ly bowed her head,
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born

his wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame;
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee,
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said,
in Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn,

“All hail,” said he, “thou low - ly maid - en Ma - ry,
thy Son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
“my soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly Name.”
and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say -

most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,” Glo - ri - a!
most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,” Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!
“Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,” Glo - ri - a!

Words: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) Music: *Gabriel's Message*, Basque carol; harm. Edgar Pettman (1865-1943) Copyright ©1961, B. Feldman and Co. Ltd., trading as H. Freeman & Co. Reproduced by permission of EMI Music Publishing Ltd., (London). All rights reserved. Used with permission.

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Presider: Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People: You come to your people and set them free.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Presider

Let us confess our sins to God. *[Silence is kept.]*

Presider and People

God of all mercy,

**we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.**

**We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.**

**We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.**

**Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

Presider

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Presider: 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.**

THE FIRST LESSON

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.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

CANTICLE 15

The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

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.
 Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

THE SECOND LESSON

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.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ALLELUIA

(120, *Enriching Our Music 2*)

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The lyrics are: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." The melody is simple and hymn-like, with the bass line providing a steady accompaniment.

Setting: South African, arr. Gobingca Mxadana © Gobingca Mxadana.
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Cantor: The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him:
yea, all such as call upon him faithfully.
Come, O LORD, and tarry not:
forgive the misdeeds of thy people.

The People sing the Gospel Alleluia again.

THE GOSPEL

LUKE 1:26-45

Presider: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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.

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

Presider: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE SERMON

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR ADVENT

[The Rev. Kay Sylvester, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Tustin, CA]

Presider and People

**Because of You, O God,
we are people of hope,
even though the night of winter is upon us.**

Because of You, Divine Presence,
we are people of peace,
even though violent speech
and bared teeth surround us.

Because of You, Christ who is coming,
we are people of joy,
even though the leaves have fallen
and the music has stopped.

Because of You, Spirit of Life,
we are people of love,
even though we see
the diminishment of human dignity all around us.

We call upon You, ever-blessed One,
for strength and purpose,
for gratitude and generosity,
for the grace to bring light,
and the nourishment of your grace,
and the thirst-quenching stream of your justice
into the world that You love
with an everlasting love.

Come among us and set us free. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Intercessor and People

O Wisdom from on high, holy Word of God, you sustain the universe with infinite love and tender care. In this Advent season of longing and anticipation, we pray to you, saying, "O come, O come, Emmanuel."

Unite and uphold your universal church. Help your ministers, lay and ordained, carry the Good News of salvation to all who await the sign of your coming. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Lend your wisdom and compassion to those in authority around the world. Help them lead those held captive by oppression and strife, into the freedom of justice and peace. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Inspire all people to be grateful occupants and devoted caretakers of your wondrous creation. Help us preserve Earth's lands, waters, and atmosphere, and protect the creatures who inhabit them. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Shepherd the people and ministries of St. Thomas's Church. Help us listen closely to you, and follow where you lead. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Comfort those who are grieving, lonely, discouraged, or depressed this holiday season. Help them find peace, joy, hope, and love. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Restore those suffering from sickness, poverty, violence, or addiction. Help them overcome adversity and find fullness of life. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Strengthen healthcare workers, first responders, and all whose labors are essential during this coronavirus pandemic. Help them find courage to face the difficult days that yet lie ahead. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Bring into your glorious presence those who have died. Help all people to find risen life in you. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Hear our additional prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, which we now offer either silently or aloud. [*You may unmute yourself to offer a prayer intention.*]

Presider

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, come and shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death; O Emmanuel, God with us, come and save us, O Lord our God. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Presider: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Your ongoing financial support of St. Thomas's Church is especially appreciated at this time. To give online with a debit or credit card, go to the Home page of the Church website (www.stthomasnewhaven.org), and click GIVE NOW. If you are viewing this document electronically, you can simply [CLICK HERE](#). Know also that the Church office is able to process checks that have been mailed. Thank you!

OFFERTORY HYMN

O come, O come, Emmanuel (56, *The Hymnal 1982*)

(Dec. 23) 1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
(Dec. 17) 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
(Dec. 18) 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
(Dec. 23) 8 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som

1 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
2 all things might - i - ly; to us the path of know - ledge
3 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
8 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile

1 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
2 show, and teach us in her ways to go.
3 law, in cloud, and ma - jes - ty, and awe.
8 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

You are invited to say the Lord's Prayer in the language of your choice.

**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 for ever. Amen.**

A PRAYER OF COMMUNION *[The Rev. Keri Aubert]*

Presider and People

God of abundant love, we thank you for nurturing us with this holy gathering of holy people. When we are alone, remind us of the communion we share with one another and with you. When we are hungry, show us the banquet that you are preparing for the redemption of the world. Keep peace in our hearts, so that we can sow peace in the world, walking in gladness the way of your beloved child, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ADVENT BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Presider

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Presider: Let us bless the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

Ave Maria

Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum
benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.

Ave Maria Mater Dei
ora pro nobis peccatoribus
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Hail Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Words: Luke 1:28,31; Petrus Canisius (1521–1597), 1555 Music: Franz Schubert (1797–1828), D.839, Op. 52, 1825

After the Anthem, you are invited to stay online for virtual Coffee Hour. Please see the Parish Enews for the latest announcements and information.

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Announcements

Stay in touch! Subscribe to the Weekly Parish Enews and "like" St. Thomas's on Facebook.

Longest Night Observance: TONIGHT, 6 p.m. There is a relatively new tradition in the church of holding "Blue Christmas" or "Longest Night" services on or near the winter solstice. This will be a short and peaceful service of music, readings, and prayers.

Christmas Eve Worship: Thursday, December 24, 6 p.m. We're having one service on Christmas Eve, which will include elements of both our usual early and late services. Expect a creative take on the pageant, and the chance to sing some favorite carols. There are two special ways you can participate if you wish: dress like a shepherd for the pageant; bring a candle to light for "Silent Night." See the details in the Enews.

Please consider **Alternative Giving** for those on your Christmas list this year. Suggested non-profits are highlighted in the Enews – and St. Thomas's can even help you make those donations. Our Sunday School children are particularly advocating for donations to the **Clean Water** program of ERD's Gifts for Life program.

Serving Today

Presider & Preacher: The Rev. Keri Aubert

Musician: Dr. Noah Horn

Lectors: Jenny Chavira, Wesleigh Anderson

Intercessor: Max Ballardo

This Week's Prayer Intentions

Pray for those on our Parish prayer list:
Sally, Bonnie, Franklin, Ken

Pray for those in any need or trouble, especially:
all who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who work in healthcare and those who have lost their livelihood

In the Episcopal Church in Connecticut Cycle of Prayer, pray for:

Calvary St. George's, Bridgeport; St. Luke/St. Paul, Bridgeport; St. John's, Bridgeport; For the children of the world, the Bishops' Fund for Children, and all ECCT ministries for children at risk

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for:

mission agencies and their ministry throughout the Anglican Communion, including the Mothers' Union around the world

In the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, pray for:

Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan

Leadership at St. Thomas's

Church Vestry

Kyle Holton (Senior Warden)

Denise Terry (Junior Warden)

Ricardo Chavira (Treasurer)

Linda Meyer (Clerk)

Greg D'Andrea

Bill English

Chris Martinez

Alexandria Robison

Catherine Stricklan

The Rev. Keri Aubert (Rector)

Church (Volunteer) Associate Priests

The Rev. Canon K. Dexter Cheney

The Rev. Jakki Flanagan

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ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH & DAY SCHOOL

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