

The Order of Service for Home Worship

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Hymn 1: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came.

1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
“All hail,” said he, “thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady,” Gloria!
2. “For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be.
All generations laud and honour thee.
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favoured lady,” Gloria!
3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.
“My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name.”
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!
4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn;
And Christian folk throughout the land will ever say:
“Most highly favoured lady,” Gloria!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace is our hearts.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into your kingdom of peace.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you will come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Collect: God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our Saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah **7. 10-16**

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 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. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80. 1-7 Response: Let your face shine, O God, that we may be saved.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim,

shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. **(R)**

Stir up your might, and come to save us!
Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure. (R)

You make us the scorn of our neighbours;
our enemies laugh among themselves.
Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved. (R)

A reading from letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 1. 1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel'

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew. 1. 18-25

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke

from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation; Today we near the end of our Advent journey. Christmas is near as we approach Bethlehem to worship the Christ child lying in the manger, to reflect once again on the miracle of the incarnation, God coming among his people and living with us, our constant companion on our journey through life. For this last stage of our Advent journey we give thanks for the Blessed Virgin Mary who is to bear the Son of God into the world and Joseph who is called by God to be the earthly father of Jesus. Their story is a story of faithfulness to God, an example of the trusting our lives to God and his Will for us. Mary had received a visit from the Archangel Gabriel who tells her that she is to bear a very special son. The news is troublesome for Joseph who is betrothed to Mary. When he hears the news Joseph's first reaction is to protect Mary from public scandal by dismissing her quietly. However after an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream Joseph changes his mind. He is convinced by the angel that the baby Mary is carrying is the Messiah that Mary is the Virgin of whom the prophet spoke. Just as Mary had accepted her call to be the Mother of the Son of God Joseph now accepted his call to be the earthly father of the child and to call him Emmanuel, "God with us." Joseph and Mary now begin their own journey which will take them to Bethlehem. There is great excitement, in just a short while the Messiah, long promised by God, and foretold by the prophets throughout the Old Testament will come and live among his people. He will bring the good news of the love of God to all his people. He will bring the lost back into the fold of God's family. He will bring peace and hope to those who are in despair, the deep sense of peace and hope which only God can give in the midst of a dark, fearful world. On the birth of this boy, the son of Mary, the whole world places its faith and trust for a better future. We have received the good news of the love of God for us, we have responded by promising at our baptisms to walk with Jesus as he walks with us. Today we walk with Mary and Joseph at the beginning of their journey and this week we will walk with them as they journey to Bethlehem. The calling of Mary to bear the Son of God into the world is a calling that we all share. Her journey is one we are called to walk with her in our own daily lives. For as Mary bore her son to the world in her womb and in his birth at Bethlehem so we are called to bear her son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the world every day in our hearts. We have promised our lives to God just as Mary did. With her we say to God, "let it be done to me according to your word," This Christmas and every day let us open our hearts to God, let him make his home within us that with open,

loving and generous hearts we may bear his Son bringing the light of his love all in need in the darkest places of the earth. Amen.

Intercessions:

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese, for our own Church and the Churches of our Ministry Area; that with Mary the Church may faithfully proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; may the light of Christ enlighten the nations that your will may be followed by all people.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; help us to meet each other's needs with love and generosity.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as 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,
The power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Peace:

Jesus said, Peace I bequeath to you; my own peace I give you; a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.

The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

God, our deliverer, awaken our hearts to prepare the way for the advent of your Son; that, with minds purified by the grace of his coming, we may serve you faithfully all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Christ the sun of righteousness shine on you and scatter the darkness from before you and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 2: O come, O come, Emmanuel

- 1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 2. O come, thou rod of Jesse free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 3. O come, thou day spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 4. O come, thou key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 5. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient time didst give the Law,
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**