

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 second book of Samuel

7. 1-11, 16

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 for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever. 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.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Canticle: Magnificat (Luke 1. 47-55)

Response: The mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; (R)

for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him, from generation to generation. (R)

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; (R)

he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham
and to his descendants for ever. (R)

A reading from Paul's letter to the 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 for ever! Amen.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to Go

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Luke

1. 26-38

Glory to you, O Lord.

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, favoured 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 favour 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 for ever, 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation: Today we approach the end of our Advent journey. Christmas is almost upon us 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 join Mary who is to bear the Son of God into the world. Mary received a visit from the Archangel Gabriel who tells her that she is to bear a very special son. Mary immediately accepts the call and places herself in God's care and service. She begins her own journey which will take her to Bethlehem and ultimately to the foot of the Cross. Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth who is herself expecting a child, John the Baptist. As Mary approaches Elizabeth greets her with the words "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Her own child John leaps in Elizabeth's womb recognising that even in the womb he is in the presence of the Messiah, the Son of God. 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 as she visits Elizabeth and this week we will walk with her and Joseph 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.

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 and for our own churches; 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 parish 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:

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to shine on those who live in darkness, under the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. 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.**