

**Welcome to  
a service of Holy Communion/Service of the Word  
21st December 2025  
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**The Greeting**

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

**Hymn: Hail to the Lord's Anointed**

**Lighting the Advent Candle**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent – The Virgin Mary**

*Theme: Obedience and Wonder*

We light this candle for Mary,  
who bore the Word made flesh  
with courage and grace.  
May this flame glow with quiet trust,  
and draw us into the mystery of God-with-us.  
**Amen.**

**Prayer of Preparation**

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **Invitation to confession**

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

*cf 1 Corinthians 4.5*

## **Confession**

Turn to us again, O God our saviour,  
and let your anger cease from us:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Show us your compassion, O Lord,  
and grant us your salvation:  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Your salvation is near for those that fear you,  
that glory may dwell in our land:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## **Absolution**

May the God of love and power  
forgive *you* and free *you* from *your* sins,  
heal and strengthen *you* by his Spirit,  
and raise *you* to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **The Collect**

*In a Service of the Word, the Collect is said later in the service*

Eternal God,  
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,  
so we wait for his coming in glory;  
bring us through the birth pangs  
of this present age  
to see, with her, our great salvation  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Old Testament Reading**

### **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.

*At the end:*

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## **New Testament Reading**

### **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.

*At the end:*

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## **Hymn: Psalm 130 (sung version)**

## **Gospel Reading**

### **Matthew 1.18–end**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord  
Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**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.

*At the end:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you O Christ**

## Sermon

**Song: Thorns in the straw**

## Profession of faith

We say together in faith  
**Holy, holy, holy**  
**is the Lord God almighty,**  
**who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father, who created all things:  
**for by his will they were created**  
**and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son,  
who was slain:  
**for with his blood,  
he purchased us for God,  
from every tribe and language,  
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:  
**the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'  
Even so come, Lord Jesus!  
Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom, saying:  
Father, by your Spirit  
**bring in your kingdom.**

*This response may be used:*  
Lord in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

*At the end:*  
Lord of the church,  
**hear our prayer,  
and make us one in heart and mind  
to serve you with joy for ever.  
Amen.**

*Service of the Word continues on page 13  
Holy Communion service continues overleaf*

## The Peace

In the tender mercy of our God,  
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

**Hymn: Restore O Lord**

## Preparation of the Table

Blessed be God,  
who feeds the hungry,  
who raises the poor,  
who fills our praise.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

## Eucharistic Prayer A

The Lord is here.  
**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

## Extended preface

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.  
He is the one foretold by all the prophets,  
whom the Virgin Mother bore with love beyond all telling.  
John the Baptist was his herald  
and made him known when at last he came.  
In his love Christ fills us with joy  
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,  
so that when he comes again he may find us watching in prayer,  
our hearts filled with wonder and praise.

And so, with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your glory,  
and join in their unending hymn of praise:  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**  
**God of power and might,**  
**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**  
**Hosanna in the highest.**  
**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**  
**Hosanna in the highest.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
and as we follow his example and obey his command,  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us his body and his blood;



who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper  
he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it to them, saying:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father,  
we remember his offering of himself  
made once for all upon the cross;  
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;  
we look for the coming of your kingdom,  
and with this bread and this cup  
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

Accept through him, our great high priest,  
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,  
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts  
in the presence of your divine majesty,

renew us by your Spirit,  
inspire us with your love  
and unite us in the body of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
we worship you, Father almighty,  
in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom  
in the words our Saviour taught us.

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

Every time we eat this bread  
and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death  
until he comes.**

## **Agnus Dei**

**Jesus, Lamb of God,  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins,  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world,  
grant us peace.**

## **Giving of Communion**

Jesus is the Lamb of God  
who takes away the sin of the world.  
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.  
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

## **Music for distribution of communion**

## **Prayer After Communion**

Heavenly Father,  
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of the promised saviour:  
fill us your servants with your grace,  
that in all things we may embrace your holy will  
and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Generous God,  
you have fed us at your heavenly table.  
Set us on fire with your Spirit  
that when Christ comes again  
we may shine like lights before his face;  
who with you and the Spirit lives for ever.  
Amen.**

### **Notices**

### **The Dismissal**

Our Lord says, I am coming soon.

**Amen. Come Lord Jesus.**

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting.

**Amen.**

### **The blessing**

May God himself, the God of peace,  
make you perfect and holy;  
and keep you all safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,  
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
And the blessing ...

### **Hymn: Tell out my soul**

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and to serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ,**

**Amen.**

### **Exit Music**

*Service of the Word continues here*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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in the words our Saviour taught us.

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hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
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Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
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For the kingdom, the power,  
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so we wait for his coming in glory;  
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to see, with her, our great salvation  
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**Hymn: Tell out my soul**

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**In the name of Christ,**

**Amen.**

**Exit Music**

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