

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON MA**  
**Holy Eucharist for the Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**December 20, 2020**

**Organ Prelude**

Dr. Grant Moss

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Sung Introit**

Annie Rogers, soloist

*O come, O King of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our King of Peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

*Presider*

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People*

**And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

**Collect for Purity**

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,  
And from you no secrets are hid: 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.**

**Canticle J** A Song of Judith

*Judith 16:13-16*

*Recited in unison*

**I will sing a new song to my God, \***

**for you are great and glorious, wonderful in strength, invincible.**

**Let the whole creation serve you, \* for you spoke and all things came into being.**

**You sent your breath and it formed them, \* no one is able to resist your voice.**

**Mountains and seas are stirred to their depths, \***

**rocks melt like wax at your presence.**

**But to those who fear you, \* you continue to show mercy.**

**No sacrifice, however fragrant, can please you, \***

**but whoever fears the Lord shall stand in your sight for ever.**

## **The 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 Liturgy of the Word**

### **First Lesson**

*2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16*

A reading from the second book of the prophet Samuel.

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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26** *Misericordias Domini*

1 Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing; \*

from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

**2 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; \*  
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.**

3 "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; \*

I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

**4 'I will establish your line for ever, \*  
and preserve your throne for all generations.'"**

19 You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: \* "I have set the  
crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.

**20 I have found David my servant; \* with my holy oil have I anointed him.**

21 My hand will hold him fast \* and my arm will make him strong.

**22 No enemy shall deceive him, \* nor any wicked man bring him down.**

23 I will crush his foes before him \* and strike down those who hate him.

**24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, \*  
and he shall be victorious through my Name.**

25 I shall make his dominion extend \* from the Great Sea to the River.

**26 He will say to me, 'You are my Father, \* my God, and the rock of my salvation.'**

**Second Lesson**

*Romans 16:25-27*

A reading from the first letter to the Romans.

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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Gospel**

*Luke 1:26-38*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord 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.

The Gospel of the Lord. *People Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

## **Sermon**

The Rev. Dr. Julianne Buenting+

## **The Nicene Creed** *recited in unison* **BCP pg 358-359**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate  
from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Prayers of the People

As we joyfully await the full manifestation of God's reign in Christ, let us pray for the needs of the church and the world.

O Wisdom, you come forth from the mouth of the Most High and reach from beginning to end, mightily and sweetly ordering all things.

Behold and bless your church, remembering especially Michael our presiding bishop, Douglas, our bishop, and all ministers. Be present in ordering the life of this and every congregation. **Come and teach us the way of prudence.**

O Adonai, God of the Covenant, ruler of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and on Mount Sinai gave your law. Forgive us when we stray from your guidance and will. **Come and redeem us for our life together.**

O Root of Jesse, before you rulers will shut their mouths, and nations bow in worship: We pray for your peace and justice in every nation and throughout the world; be present to all whose lives are ravaged by war and violence. Guide the leaders of this and every land into the paths of peace and goodwill.  
**Come save us and do not delay.**

O Key of David, and scepter of the house of Israel, you open and no one can shut, you shut and no one can open: Guide us in opening the doors of opportunity for the unemployed, for the unhoused, for the imprisoned, and for all who are suffering; and lead us in closing the doors to racism, poverty, and injustice.  
**Come and free all those who are held in bonds of oppression.**

O King of the Nations and their Desire, you are the cornerstone that makes us one: We lift up all those in any need or trouble, especially those on our parish prayer list: David Rosenberger, Lorna, Nancy Elliott, Janet, the Smith family, Betty and Donnie Willard, Norma Keough, Bre, BettyLou DeTurck, Melissa, Vanessa, Richard, Mary Thurber, Mary Wozniak and her mother Mildred Lindsay, and our Manna guests and volunteers. **Come and save us whom you have fashioned out of clay.**

O Dayspring, radiance of the Light Eternal and Sun of Righteousness: Shine your light on those who have died; and bring comfort to all those who mourn.  
**Come and enlighten all who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.**

O Emmanuel, Expected One and Savior, we give thanks for all the blessings of this life; Make each of us ready to receive you into our hearts, to serve you in all whom we meet, and to greet you in the fullness of your glory in the day of your appearing.  
**Come and save us, O Lord our God.**

*The presider concludes with the following collect:*

Hasten, O God, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

## **Confession**

*The Presider says*     Let us confess our sins to God.

*Minister and People in unison*

**Most merciful God, 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.**

## **Absolution**

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.**

## **Sign of Peace**

The peace of God be with you.

**And also with you.**

## **Offertory Music**

*H265 The angel Gabriel from heaven came*

Annie Rogers, soloist

*1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came, With wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.  
"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary, Most highly favored lady." Gloria!*

*2 "How blest among all women you shall be, Whom ev'ry age will praise continually.  
Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!*

*3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head. "To me be as it pleases God," she said.  
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady. Gloria!*

*4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born, In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn.  
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!*

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

*Presider:* The Lord be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Presider* Lift up your hearts.  
*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**  
*Presider* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
*People* **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Presider and People*  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "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. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,  
**We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection,  
we await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all;  
presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.  
We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts  
that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new  
Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him,  
being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ,  
and bring us to that heavenly country where, with St. Mary the God-bearer,  
St. John and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your  
children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation,  
the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.  
By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
all honor and glory is yours, Gracious God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

*Presider:* As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,  
**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.**

### **Fraction Anthem**

*Presider:* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
*People:* **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**  
*Presider:* The gifts of God for the People of God.

**Prayer of Spiritual Communion** (*adapted from the Prayer Book for the Armed Services*)  
In union, O Lord, with your faithful people and your Church, we delight to offer to you  
praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your  
resurrection; we await your coming in glory. Since we cannot receive you today  
in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our  
hearts. Heal and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Christ, and let us never be  
separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us,  
in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

**Post Communion Prayer** *in unison*

**Almighty and ever-living God,  
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food  
of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;  
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries  
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,  
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.  
And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do,  
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.  
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

**Advent Blessing**

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:* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, Alleluia, alleluia!

*People:* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Postlude Music**

**Dr. Grant Moss**