

HOLY EUCHARIST

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 20, 2020

WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE Finale for Advent Colin Mawby (1936-2019)

OPENING HYMN Hark! A thrilling voice, vv 1-2 (*Words on last page*) Hymnal 59

OPENING SENTENCES

Celebrant The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, *Isaiah 40:5*
People **and all flesh shall see it together.**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And God's Spirit with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen**

WE RECEIVE GOD'S WORD

READING FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing;

I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God;

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,

he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

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

People **Thanks be to God.**

CANTICLE

A Song of the Wilderness (Isaiah 35:1-7, 10)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, **the desert shall rejoice and blossom;**
 It shall blossom abundantly, **and rejoice with joy and singing.**
 They shall see the glory of the Lord, **the majesty of our God.**
 Strengthen the weary hands, **and make firm the feeble knees.**
 Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear! **Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you."**
 Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, **and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.**
 Then shall the lame leap like a deer, **and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.**
 For waters shall break forth in the wilderness **and streams in the desert;**
 The burning sand shall become a pool **and the thirsty ground, springs of water.**
 The ransomed of God shall return with singing, **with everlasting joy upon their heads.**
 Joy and gladness shall be theirs, **and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

THE GOSPEL

Luke 1:5-25

The gospels are stories of Jesus' life

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

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

SERMON

"Live Expectantly"

The Rev. Dr. Kate Heichler

PRAYER SONGO come, o come Emmanuel, vv 7-8 (*Words on last page*)

Hymnal 56

OUR PRAYERS

Let us offer our thanksgivings and prayers for the world, the church, the people
in our lives, responding to "Emmanuel, God with us," with "Hear our prayer."

Almighty God, we thank you for your many gifts to us;
for all celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week...,
And for other gifts we name now...

Emmanuel, God with us: **Hear our prayer.**

Jesus, you call us to be light to the world.
Bless all churches and ministers, especially...
Make your church a beacon of hope, grace and mercy.
Emmanuel, God with us: **Hear our prayer.**

Jesus, we lay before you the wounds of the world...
Provide for those in need; comfort those in mourning;
give justice to the oppressed; and awaken generosity in us.
Emmanuel, God with us: **Hear our prayer.**

Holy Spirit, thank you for your healing love all around us. We lift before you now...
and any others whom we name now...
We pray for those who have died and those who mourn them:
Emmanuel, God with us: **Hear our prayer.**

Jesus, Redeemer, we thank you for the forgiveness and grace you offer us.
Forgive us for all the ways we ignore your true gifts in this season of giving;
for the ways we hurt those we love;
for the ways we damage our bodies and our planet;
for the ways we take more than we need and ignore the needs around us;
and any other sins of action or inaction that we name before you now...
Emmanuel, God with us: **Hear our prayer.**

ABSOLUTION

Celebrant Beloved of God, your sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Take up your forgiveness with thanksgiving, and live without shame or anxiety.

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY HYMN

On Jordan's bank, vv 1, 2, 5 (*Words on last page*)

Hymnal 76

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Or text "CCLAPLATA" to 73256, and follow the prompts.*

THE HOLY MEAL

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

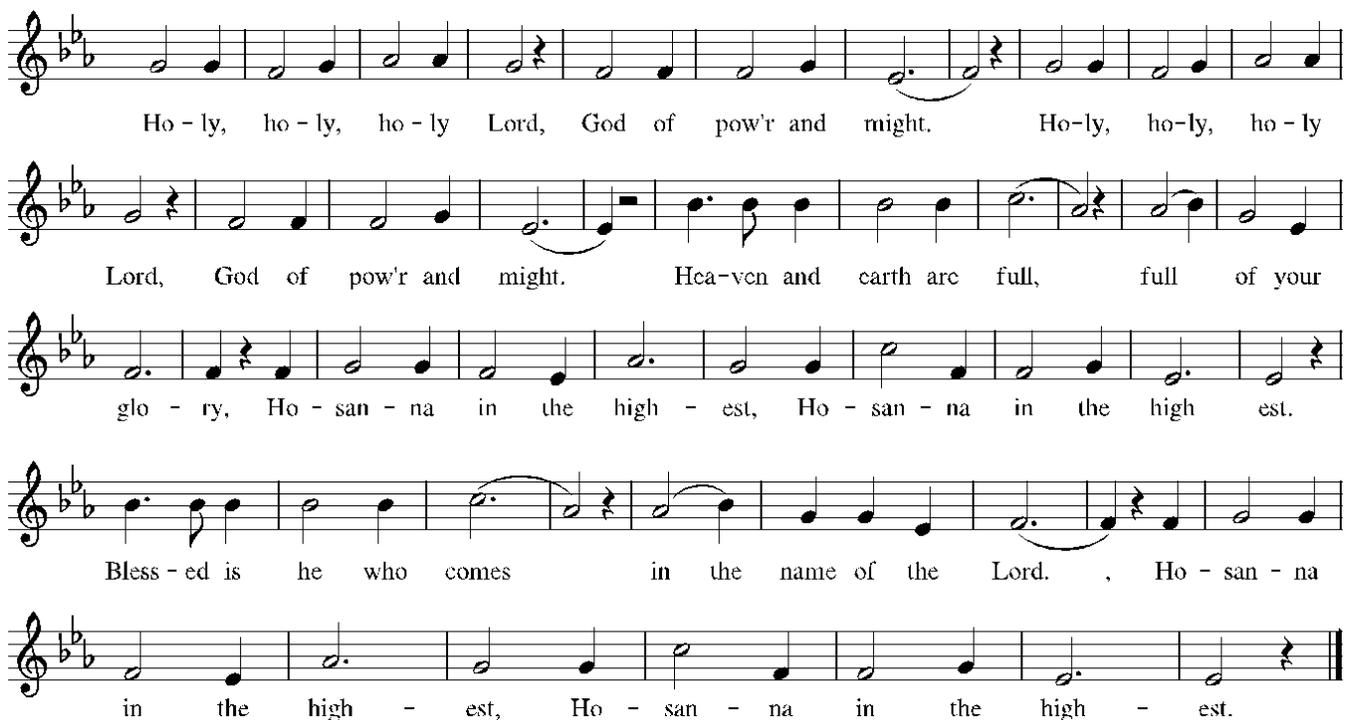
People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, you have given us tongues and voices with which to praise you, and you have given us abundant reason to praise you – the promise of salvation, the promise of righteousness.

And so we lift our voices now, joining with the heavenly chorus to sing:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly
Lord, God of pow'r and might. Hea - ven and earth are full, full of your
glo - ry, Ho - san - na in the high - est, Ho - san - na in the high est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. , Ho - san - na
in the high - est, Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Lord God, you made this beautiful world **and all the life it holds.**

Then humankind, given freedom, overturned the harmony of that creation;
allowing sin and death free play. **We turned the world upside down.**

When you sent your Son into human flesh, bound in space and time,
against all reason and expectation,
you began the turning that is restoring all things to wholeness.

In your tender compassion, O God, the dawn from on high has broken upon us,
in the person of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, 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 to remember 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
for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this to remember me.”**

Recalling his goodness and perfect love, **we come to be fed and renewed.**
Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts.

Let them be for us the Body and Blood of your Son.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit. **Make us ready at all times
to speak of the hope that is within us through knowing Jesus.**

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God,
now and for ever. *And all the people said: AMEN.*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

**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 our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem: Jesus, Lamb of God, **have mercy on us.**
(spoken) Jesus, Bearer of our sins, **have mercy on us.**
Jesus, Redeemer of the world, **give us your peace.**

THE COMMUNION

*Consecrated bread will be brought to all present in person; those worshipping
at home are invited to partake of consecrated bread and wine at home tables.*

COMMUNION MUSIC

sung by Michael Peerless

PRAYER OF THANKS

**Almighty God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine,
signs of your broken body and shed blood,
by which we are healed in body, mind and spirit.
Give us the faith to see you at work when it looks like the world is upside-down.
Give us expectant hearts to anticipate your coming to us,
in Word and Sacrament, work and rest, in other people and in silence,
That we may bear your light into the darkness.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

THE BLESSING

CLOSING HYMN

Canticle of the Turning, v 4 (*Words on last page*)

**PRAYERS FOR BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
COMMUNITY NEWS**

DISMISSAL

Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ

People **Thanks be to God!**

THE PRAYERS

We Pray For: Those in need of healing – Melanie Coe, Alicia Cordelle, Steve Blamer, John MacCoy, Marion Denniston, Barry Kercher, Joan Shoemaker, Beverly Stone, Gary Murray, Susan White, Bonnie Rafer, Garner Burroughs, Andie Corby, Betty and Peanut Bowling, Susie and Ed Marshall, Linda Mattingly; and those in mourning, Barb Palko and family, Bill Cooke and family, Nancy Batten

Birthdays: Eddie Murphy, 12/20; Peggy Schaumburg, 12/21; Toby Clark, 12/22; Joe Drinks, 12/23; Jean Barbour, 12/24 **Anniversaries:** Barry and Mary Kercher, 12/20; Larry and Barbara Poe, 12/23

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOMELESS MEMORIAL SERVICE Monday, December 21, 7 pm on Zoom – Lifestyles of Maryland has requested that we go ahead with the annual Homeless Person's Memorial Service, traditionally held on the longest night of the year, to remember those in every community who have died homeless. We have lost some four people in our region this year. This online service will give us a chance to remember them and honor their lives, and rededicate ourselves to ending homelessness in our nation. See Facebook event or Enews for the link (it is not our usual service link).

A CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTMAS AT HOME – Our main Christmas Eve service will be on Zoom this year, so that we can worship together as a church family, and so that we can sing carols! Please come to our regular church link at 5:45 (there will be some special music beforehand). At 6 pm we will have a fabulous service with carols, pageant (videotaped on a farm in October), a Christmas message and communion. Each household is receiving a gift bag with the necessary ingredients.

There will be one in-person service for both parishes at Christ Church in La Plata at 3 pm on Christmas Eve – no singing, alas; masks and distancing and pre-registration are required.

TIME TO PLEDGE FOR 2021! Vestries are budgeting for 2021 - please participate in God's mission at Christ Church through pledging. Our Stewardship theme celebrates the distinctiveness we each bring to Christ Church, the diversity God delights in, and the wonderful flavor that results when we bring ourselves together, investing in God's mission through our church. Salads generally begin with greens! What percentage of your income can you pledge to enrich God's salad at Christ Church?

COLLECTING COATS AND BLANKETS: We now have a beautiful box to receive donations of blankets and coats, new and used. We are seeking a coordinator for this project, some signage, and will need some folks to assist with laundering the used items, and/or making donations to our Giving Fund to cover the cost of dry cleaning. We can also use help with distributing the goods. Please contact Deacon Joan if you'd like to be part of this ministry to keep people warm this winter.

TUTORING PUBLIC SCHOOLCHILDREN: The havoc which Covid restrictions have wreaked on our educational systems has left many children at risk of failing this semester. Neal Bankenstein, who works

with the most vulnerable children and families in the Charles County Public Schools, has suggested we launch a tutoring program to give kids some extra help. He and other administrators will refer children to us; we'll match them up with tutors who are comfortable with the needed subject matter, and we'll set up a time for tutoring to happen on Zoom. You can fill out a form to indicate your subjects and available times – find it on the “Giving to the World” page on our website, or in the Enews.

GIVING FUND – Please consider making a dedicated donation to the Giving Fund, from which Rev. Kate can offer help. Our policy is to help once, as we are able, and deal with repeat requests on a case-by-case basis. You can write a check or give online at the donate page on our website, www.christchurchlaplata.org, or text “CCLAPLATA” to 73256, and follow the prompts, designating Giving Fund. You now have the option to make pledge offerings or donations online, or by text.

ONLINE GIVING - You can text a donation - text "CCLAPLATA" to 73256, and follow the prompts. You can give to Open Plate or toward your pledge. A 2.6% fee is charged for credit or debit cards - you'll have the option to include that in your gift or not. Standard text message rates do apply. You can also give online - go to www.christchurchlaplata.org and scroll down to the "Donate" link.

HYMNS

Hark! A thrilling voice

1 Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding.
"Christ is nigh," it seems to say;
"Cast away the works of darkness,
O ye children of the day."

2 Wakened by the solemn warning,
from earth's bondage let us rise;
Christ, our sun, all sloth dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

7 O come, Desire of nations
Bind in one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid thou our sad divisions cease,
and be thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

8 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.

On Jordan's bank

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings.

5 All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
whose advent doth thy people free;
whom with the Father we adore
and Holy Spirit evermore.

2 Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
make straight the way for God within,
and let each heart prepare a home
where such a mighty guest may come.

Canticle of the Turning

Though the nations rage from age to age
We remember Who holds us fast
God's mercy must deliver us
From the conqueror's crushing grasp
This saving word that out forebears
Heard is the promise which holds us bound
'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God
Who is turning the world around.

Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring
Let the fires of your justice burn
Wipe away all tears
For the dawn draws near
And the world is about to turn!