

## Being Recognized, Encountering Christ

Often called the visitation, the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth is full of joy, recognition, gratitude, and blessing. Luke immediately follows the annunciation with Mary's journey to visit Elizabeth, who gives this unmarried pregnant girl not only a safe haven but also the first glimpse of what it means to be the mother of the Savior. The encounter is full of mystery and grace: the mystery of new life forming but still invisible, and the grace of recognizing each other as the Spirit-filled mothers they are becoming.

The story is also full of theological gravity: as the women encounter each other, so do Jesus and John the Baptist. Yet the theological meaning is almost overshadowed by the sheer physicality of the encounter. Imagine the hasty travel, demonstrative greeting, joyful exclamation, the unborn John leaping for joy, and robust singing. As the celebration of Christ's birth approaches, the four active and responsive bodies in this text remind us that this is, after all, the incarnation itself unfolding.

God becomes a body in Jesus, and that body will be offered up for the sake of the world. This body, recognized already by John in the womb, will eventually undergo the suffering and shame of death on a cross. Without losing sight of that big picture, today we enter into the up-close picture of Mary and Elizabeth's encounter and share in the joy and gratitude they have in common with all who recognize Christ in their neighbor.



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*Welcoming All    Serving Others    Growing in Faith*

# Advent 4

December 22, 2024

8:00am & 10:00am

**PRELUDE**

*Journey to Bethlehem*

Cesar Franck

Organist, Sandy DeSaix

**WELCOME**

**CHILDREN'S TIME (10:00am)**

**\*PRAYER of CONFESSIO**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

**C: Amen.**

*Silence is kept for reflection*

P: God of mercy,

**C: we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

P: God of might,

**C: we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

P: God in our midst,

**C: we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

P: A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ✝ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

C: Amen.

\*OPENING HYMN ELW #254 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

**Lighting of the Fourth Candle on the Advent Wreath**

L: Blessed are you, God of hosts, for you promised to send a son, Emmanuel, who brought your presence among us; and you promise through your Son Jesus to save us from ourselves by your eternal love. As we light these candles strengthen our faith in Christ; fill our hearts with love for you and all your creatures.

L: O people of Love, come,

C: let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

*We light the fourth candle of Advent, the candle of Love*



L: The birth of Jesus is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle we celebrate the Love we find in him.

We sing ELW #257 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (v. 8, refrain).

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Celebrate Insert

**FIRST READING**

Celebrate Insert

Following: L: *The word of the Lord.* C: **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

Celebrate Insert

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

Still, Still, Still  
There's A Star in the East

arr. Moglebust  
arr. Helman  
Celebration Ringers

**\*POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: *Generous God,*

C: we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.

**\*BENEDICTION**



☐ The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.



☐ A - men

**\*DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace and serve the Lord.

C: **O.K. We will. Thanks be to God!**

**\*SENDING HYMN ELW #439**

Soon and Very Soon

**POSTLUDE**

*Tell Out My Soul*

Greatorex/Manz

*\* = Please stand as you are able*

as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

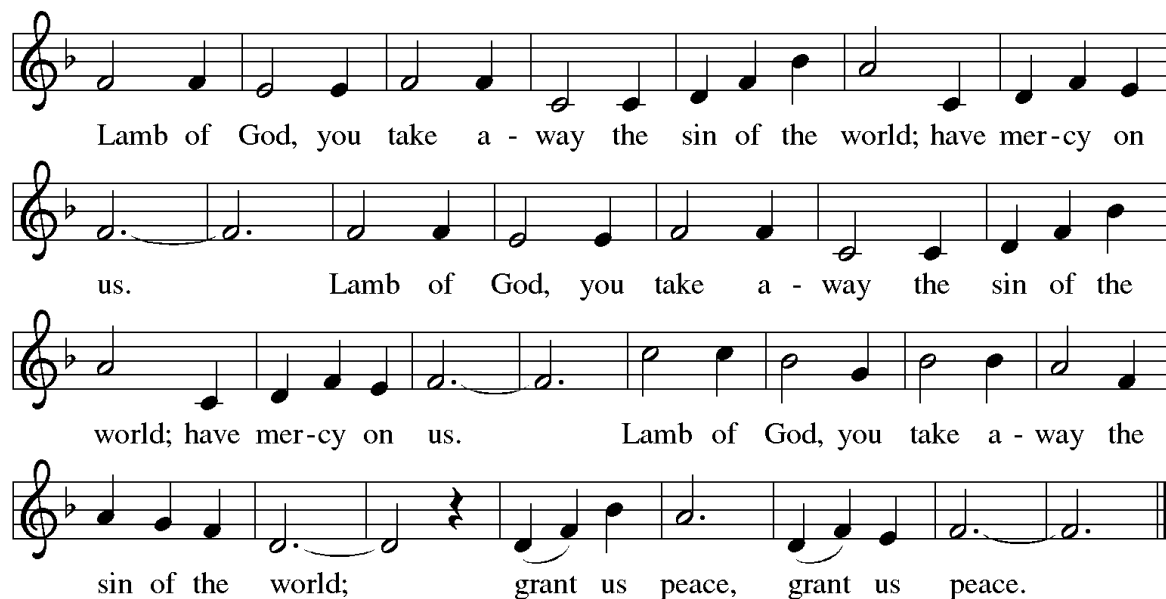
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the  
glory, forever and ever. Amen.

### DISTRIBUTION

P: Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Come!  
You are invited.

*All Christians are welcome to the Lord's Supper.  
White grape juice is available in the center of each tray  
and gluten-free wafers are at each station.*

### AGNUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN ELW #460

Now the Silence

COMMUNION HYMN [BLUE](#) WOV #702

I Am the Bread of Life

### SECOND READING

Celebrate Insert

Following: L: *The word of the Lord.* C: **Thanks be to God**

### \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

### \*GOSPEL

Celebrate Insert

Before P: *The Holy Gospel according to...* C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**  
Following P: *The Gospel of the Lord.* C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

### SERMON

Pastor Layne Nelson

### SERMON HYMN ELW #265

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

### \*APOSTLES' CREED

p. 105

### \*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

(P: Lord in your mercy... C: **Hear our prayer**)

### \*WE SHARE GOD'S PEACE

P: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

**OFFERING** *Doing God's work...*  
*Each and every week people come to our congregation*  
*and are fed... spiritually, and often physically.*  
**THANK YOU** for making that happen.



**OFFERTORY** *He Whom Shepherds Came Praising* Paul Manz

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE ELW #186** Create in Me a Clean Heart

**\*OFFERING PRAYER**

P: *Together we pray,*

C: **Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**\*GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**\*PREFACE**

**\*SANCTUS**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and

might; heav - en and earth are filled with your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in your name. Ho -

san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

**\*WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

**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,**