

[The Light of Grace

December 24, 2023 @ 9:00am

Love: Mary

Order of Service

My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed ... Isaiah 54:10

Opening Hymn: *“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”* LSB #334

O Lord, how shall I meet you, How welcome you a-right?
Your people long to greet you, My hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast To do in
spirit lowly All that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation; Love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling, That led you to embrace In love, all
love excelling, Our lost and fallen race.

Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Candle

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

(Three purple candles and one pink candle are lit on the Advent wreath.)

P Today we light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath, the candle that represents love. God had promised that his steadfast love would not depart from his people. He would remember his covenant promise. Now the time had come for his promise to be fulfilled.

C **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son ...”** (John 3:16).

P In his grace, God chose Mary, a virgin in Nazareth of Galilee, to be the mother of our Lord. The virgin-born son would be the Son of God. He was to be named Jesus, which means “God saves.”

C **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son ...”**

P The apostle John writes, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).

C **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”**

Confession and Absolution

P Let us confess our sins to God, asking him to remember his covenant love and forgive us for Jesus' sake.

C **Almighty God, your steadfast love endures forever. Our love so often fails. We do not always trust you as we should. We know that you love us, but we do not always love others as we should. We do not walk in love as Jesus our Savior did. We follow our own selfish desires instead of looking to the needs of others. Have mercy on us, and forgive our sins.**

P God remembered his covenant promise and in his steadfast love he sent his Son to be our Savior. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

P **Almighty God, your steadfast love will not depart from us!**

Hymn of Response: "Amazing Grace"

LSB #744

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come:
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease,
Amazing grace shall then prevail In heaven's joy and peace.

Prayer of the Day

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 54:7-10

Epistle Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:46-55

Children's Sermon

Sermon Hymn: *"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"*
LSB #356

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, With wings as drifted snow,
with eyes as flame: "All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, All generations laud
and honor thee; Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

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

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!

Sermon

Hymn of Response: *“Lo, How A Rose E’er Blooming”*

LSB #359

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow’ret bright, Amid the cold of winter
When half spent was the night.

O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of Glory, Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray To the bright courts of heaven
And to the endless day.

Apostles’ Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering

Prayers

Each petition concludes with the following response:

P Our God and Savior,

C Your steadfast love endures forever.

Holy Communion (LSB pp. 160-166)

Benediction (Galatians 4:4-5; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

P When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son,
born of woman, born under the law,

**C To redeem those who were under the law, so that we might
receive adoption as sons.**

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” LSB #374

Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger,
There he lay, the Undefined, To the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, Can he be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found his favor.

Angels sang about his birth, Wise men sought and found him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth Glory all around him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
He is still the Undefined But no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth. Beautiful the story;
Praise his name in all the earth; Hail the King of glory!

Sermon by Michael Hoy. Service by Carol Geisler. © 2023 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414.
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