

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16**

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, <sup>2</sup>the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” <sup>3</sup>And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup>“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>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 for my dwelling. <sup>7</sup>In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’” <sup>8</sup>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, that you should be prince over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>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. . . . <sup>16</sup>And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

**Epistle: Romans 16:25–27**

<sup>25</sup>Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching

of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup>to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

**Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26–38**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” <sup>29</sup>But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>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 father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

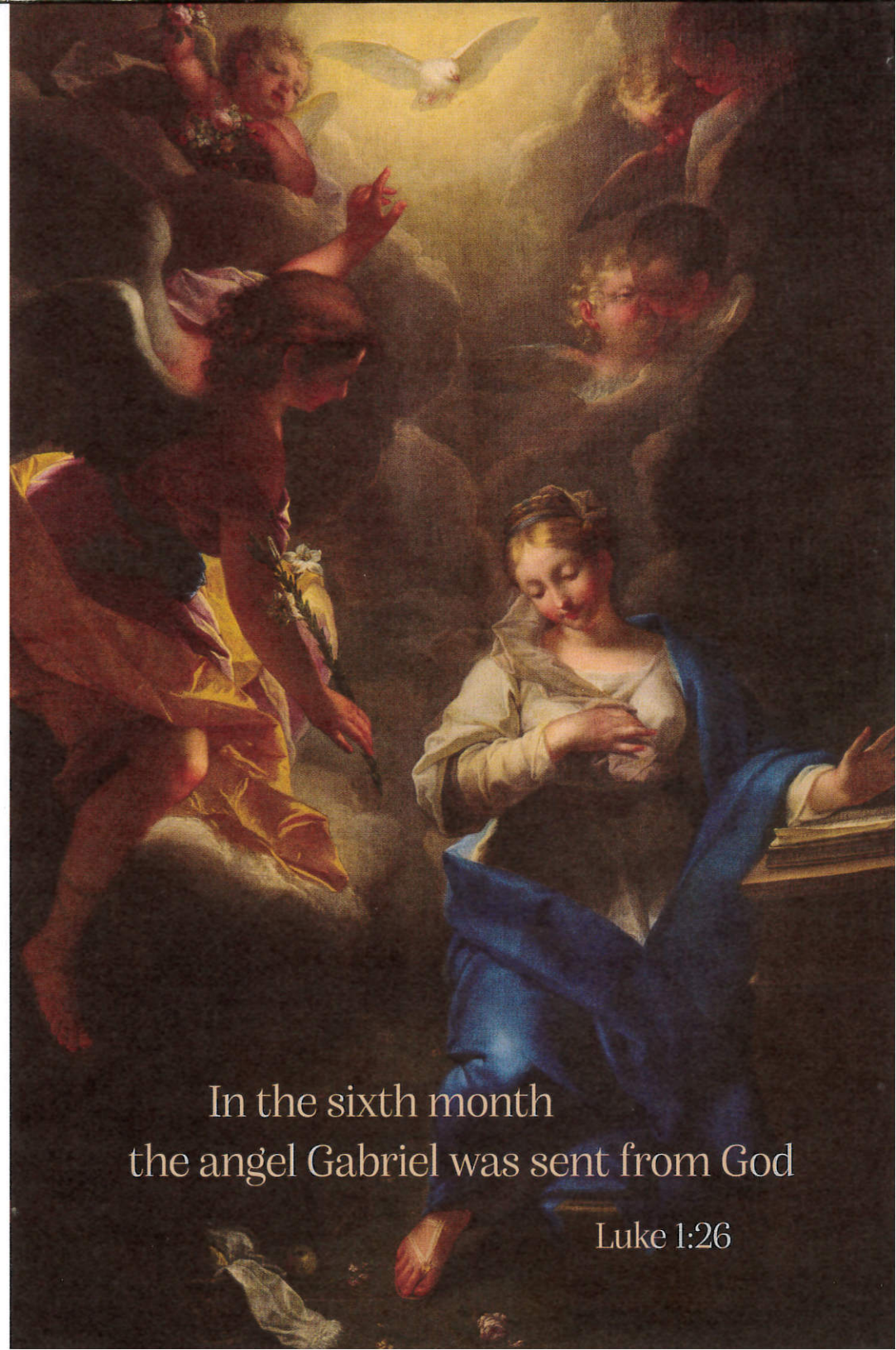
<sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.”

<sup>38</sup>And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.



**About the Cover:** From heaven to earth, Gabriel came bearing the news of the Christ Child. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus is God and man in one. He is where heaven and earth meet, bringing abundant blessing, peace, and joy in His presence. Likewise, the Lord is with us, bringing heaven and earth together at the Lord's Supper, where His very body and blood is given and shed for us.



In the sixth month  
the angel Gabriel was sent from God

Luke 1:26



**St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)**  
**8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254**  
**309-949-2516**

**December 24, 2023** **Fourth Sunday in Advent**

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*Office of Matins (Lutheran Service Book, pg. 219)*

**Hymn of Invocation 354 Arise, O Christian People**

**Opening Versicles (Advent, p. 219)**

***Venite* (p. 220)**

**Psalms 89:1-5**

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all  
generations.

<sup>2</sup>**For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;  
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."**

<sup>3</sup>You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;  
I have sworn to David my servant:

<sup>4</sup>**"I will establish your offspring forever,  
and build your throne for all generations."**

<sup>5</sup>Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,  
your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Office Hymn 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**Readings (on back of bulletin)**

**Responsory (Common, p. 221)**

**Sermon**

**Hymn 352 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord**

**Prayer for Presenting the Offering**

**Kyrie (p. 227)**

**Collect of the Day**

**P** Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your  
might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly  
lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with  
the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**Prayer of the Church**

*After each petition:*

**P** let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

*The prayer concludes:*

**P** ...one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**Benediction (p. 228)**

**Closing Hymn 338 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

*Silent Prayer*

## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org  
Website: [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo>

**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE  
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

**Rev. Timothy Nerud** **Pastor**  
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Preston Smith

Greeter: Janet Bertsos

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

**WE PRAY:** Glory be to You, eternal Father, for expounding the mystery through Your prophets and evangelists of the advent of Your Christ for our salvation, by which our eternity has been assured when He comes again in all His glorious splendor for us; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

### WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

**IF YOU DESIRE**, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

### OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm  
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)  
(Tuesday— Friday) please call ahead

**STREAM SERVICES** <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org).

**DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES** - use this website ([www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)) to have daily devotions sent to your email or phone. You never have to be without God's word.

*All bulletin announcements need to be in the Office by Wednesday mornings.*

## ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—6 Adult Bible Class—11 Worship—55

### OFFERING

Offering last Sunday	\$8,605.00
Weekly income needed per 2023 Budget	\$4,212.60
Dollar for Missions for November	\$ 60.00

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today	8:30 am	SS Christmas Program Practice
	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship
Monday	6:30 pm	Christmas Eve Worship
	10:00 am	Christmas Day/Holy Communion
Tuesday	<b>Office Closed</b>	
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
	6:00 pm	New Year's Eve Worship

***I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."***  
***Psalms 122:1***

**2 Samuel 7:4–5** – “But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan. “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?’” Nathan thought David's idea was great, so he blessed it with the Lord's name. But later that night, the Word of the Lord set him straight. The Word of the Lord, not our own desires or whims, must be the basis for what we think, say and do in God's kingdom.

**ATTENDANCE BOOK**—We ask everyone attending this morning to sign the red attendance book found at the end of each pew, then pass it back.

***CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP is tomorrow at 10 am with Holy Communion.***

**NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP**—We will worship together with members of Concordia Lutheran church as our guests. Worship will begin at 6 pm. There is no better way to end this year and begin the new year than with other brothers & sisters in Christ worshipping our mighty and loving God.

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY**—New directories are printed. Please pick up your copy/copies from the basket on the table under the office window. Please make two corrections: Kira Roberts email is (kiralee21000@gmail.com). Please remove the cell phone number for Drew Schillinger.

**PASTOR** will be out of town December 27-28. If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact Rev. Mueller @ 989-928-6603 or one of our Elders: Carl Freeman, Aaron Raschke, Preston Smith.

**OFFERING ENVELOPES** are in the church mailboxes. If you did not receive a box and would like one, please contact the church office. **PLEASE** do not use the new envelopes until January one. **ALSO**, any contributions to St. John's for 2023 must be received by December 31.

**THANK YOU** to those who brought items for Christian Rescue and also participated in the 'Giving Tree'. You are kind and generous in caring for the needs of others and in spreading the loving and saving message of Christ Jesus.

**CHRISTIAN LIVING**—Luke 1:26-38: It can be easy for us to fall into the temptation of thinking that God couldn't possibly use us to share His Good News with others. God responds to our doubts of "I'm not a good enough speaker." or "I can't really make a difference." or "What if I say the wrong thing?" with – "For nothing will be impossible with God!" Our God – with whom nothing is impossible – promises to bless our faithful witness to Him!

**A REMINDER**—If you have extra 2024 wall calendars you would like to share with the residents of Hillcrest Home, please bring them by the end of the year, Sunday, December 31st. Thank you for 41 calendars already given.

**DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS:** A Dollar for Missions gathers many small gifts – one dollar at a time! – to add up to a big impact for the spread of the saving Gospel of Christ. The current Dollars for Missions Project is to raise \$20k for stipends to pastors to begin visiting four new prisons or jails in 2024.

**QUESTION OF THE WEEK:** *Is God impersonal, a remote being way out there?*

To hear an answer to this question, go to <https://www.cidlcms.org/myth-or-faith/1.1.m4a>

If you would like to receive every week an e-mail message with a new question and a link to audio answering that question, e-mail the church office with your request at: [churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org)

**ALTAR FLOWERS**—The 2023 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms. Cost for weekly flowers are \$30 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. **Please sign up for a Sunday.**

#### PRAYER MINISTRY

*The Church waits for the Second Coming in repentance, hope and faith. For the following, we pray "Lord, have mercy."*

**MISSION**—*Rejoice that Jesus is Immanuel.* God is with us to save us. *Rejoice in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.* The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory—glory as the only-begotten of God.

**ST JOHN'S**—Mrs. Linda White—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians

may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Roy and Linda asking Your blessings upon them.

**ST. JOHN'S FAMILY**—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork Arlyn Helke Drew Schillinger

Paula Chapa Lynne Johnson Marilyn Woods

Jim Dahl Jessica Johnson

Betty Firch Aaron Raschke

**Anthony/Sami Sedotto** (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)

**Don Eggers** (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

**Jodi Martins** (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

**Jon/Anita Clausing** (missionaries in Kenya)

**Marilyn Potts** (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

**Bruce & Debbie Bley** (sister & brother-in-law of Cathy Schillinger)

**Laurie Sanford** (sister of Jan Dahl)

**Mike Erdman** (nephew of Bob Erdman)

**Shandel Loenser**

**Paul Werner** (brother of Dan Werner)

**Jim DeFauw** (son of Joyce DeFauw)

**Scott Wilson** (Great nephew of Darla Johns)

**Ron Powell** (friend of Brad Gehn)

**Russell Marshall** (friend of Brad Gehn)

**MILITARY**—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

**Mandy/Richard Davila** (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

**Luke/Nicole Thompson** (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

**Karl Flynn** (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

**Casey Powers Jr.** (step son of Lisa Powers)

**Brittany Loenser** (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

**Rylie Hallendorff** (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)

#### LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

"This time of the year always fills us with cheer. But the reason we celebrate is not always clear. The cookies, the lights, the presents, the tree. The carols, the decorations, the family parties. But all of the delight and all of the fun does not mean a thing if we don't know God's Son. The tiny baby that was born to die can sometimes cause us to stop and ask why. Do we really deserve the sacrifice He made? Are we worth the offering and the price that was paid? In His eyes, we are, because He made us His own. And on the cross, the ultimate love was shown. So take joy in the season and spread His true love. But always remember the gift from above!" *Jerrold Nelson – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*

**JOY TO THE WORLD NATIVITY DISPLAY**—St. Malachy invites the community to this event December 26—January 1 from 2-8pm in the Parish Hall. This event is Handicap accessible. Free will donations will be accepted.

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023

Text: Romans 16:25-27 (Epistle)

Other Texts: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (Old Testament Reading); Luke 1:26-38 (Gospel Reading)

### **“The Greatest Mystery Revealed”**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ who came once to redeem us from our sins and will come again to bring us into the fullness of salvation. Amen!

Most everyone loves a good mystery. Detective stories, whodunits, and extended TV series with twisting plot lines which, on each new episode, ask more questions than answer them, all these are great entertainment. Shows dealing with seemingly unexplainable phenomenon or previously unknown facts of the world, past or present, regularly catch most people’s attention.

One other place that there are mysteries is that of God and our relationship to Him. These are mysteries because they cannot be known, derived, or figured out through nature or our natural abilities. Observation, reason, experience, emotion, though these are gifts of great value in many aspects of our lives, they not only fall short, but are completely useless, and even lead us astray when dealing with divine realities. Yet sinners, thinking themselves wise, believing they have sight in the midst of their deep spiritual darkness, keep trying nonetheless and so dream up their own version of the divine and their own “obedience of faith” by which to connect with it.

So we see ancient polytheists answering the mystery by concocting up whole pantheons of gods and viewing them as powerful, yet generally uncaring, beings. Consequently, their obedience of faith was to offer sacrifices and prayers in order to, basically, bribe them to help out. But while these religions are now mostly relegated to the realm of mythology, the general idea of God requiring something in order to be right with Him or to achieve spiritual enlightenment remains. Buddhism has its Four Noble Truths, Islam has its Five Pillars, Hinduism has its Four Paths, and Judaism has obedience to the Torah (Law) as interpreted in the Talmud.

Now I acknowledge that this is an oversimplification and specifics vary. Yet, in all cases, the “obedience of faith” always includes works that need to be done to receive divine approval or achieve illumination, as manmade religions will always put the focus *on man*, what we must do or not do. But this means a mystery, that is, *uncertainty* remains. Uncertainty because the divinity, cosmic source, or spiritual principle they claim to follow remains a mystery, hidden behind works. Uncertainty concerning their obedience of faith as they are left wondering, “Is what I’m doing truly right? Is it truly enough?” And so uncertainty in their hope of salvation, however defined. Of these people Scripture well says, “Claiming to be wise, they became fools.”<sup>i</sup> True they might be well-intentioned, dedicated, even very zealous, but are fools nonetheless because *they remain in the obscurity of mystery*, spiritually groping blindly in the dark.

When it comes to divine mysteries, only God can clear them up. And He has done so through the Gospel. For the Law, though blurred is still on the heart. But in the Gospel, He has truly revealed Himself: His being and the obedience of faith that He requires.

Of course, we should not think that the Gospel is only recently revealed. It is not new. In our Epistle St. Paul writes concerning the Gospel that it, “has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings.”<sup>iii</sup> The Gospel promise was given nearly at the beginning, right after Adam and Eve sinned, when God promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the satanic serpent’s head even as His own heel would be crushed.<sup>iii</sup>

And more of the Gospel mystery was unveiled as the prophets spoke “according to the command of the eternal God.”<sup>iv</sup> Moses prophesied another prophet like him.<sup>v</sup> David was promised a son who would rule forever as we heard in our Old Testament Reading. Isaiah foretold of a child being born, a son being given, who is Immanuel, God with us, and so He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.<sup>vi</sup> More, Immanuel would be wounded for our sins and iniquities and by His wounds heal us and bring us peace.<sup>vii</sup> Micah foretold that this Seed of the woman, David’s Son and Lord, Immanuel, would be born in Bethlehem.<sup>viii</sup> All of these prophecies and many others, along with types and pictures in the temple, priesthood, and sacrifices, revealed more details to the first Gospel promise in Eden.

But finally, in the fullness of time, the Gospel promise was fulfilled when the Virgin Mary conceived and gave birth to a Child, a Son, in Bethlehem. A Son born of woman, yet virgin-born because He is Mighty God, the Father’s incarnate only-begotten Son, and so is Immanuel, God with us. He is the greatest prophet, the eternal Word who speaks the Word to us. He had His heel struck by the devilish foe on the cross, but there He crushed the Old Evil Foe’s head, bleeding and dying for mankind’s sin to release us from sin and Satan’s rule, rising in victory to free us from death and hell.

And so He is rightly named Jesus, the Lord Saves, because He has saved His people from their sins.<sup>ix</sup> And now He, David’s descendent, ascended and exalted to the right hand of God rules an everlasting kingdom and, with His Father, sends the Holy Spirit through the Gospel which Paul, the rest of the apostles, and all faithful ministers since them have proclaimed.

And so the mystery of God is unveiled in the Gospel as He reveals Himself to us as Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Unveiling Himself when the One by whom all things were made veils Himself in our flesh and blood so that we can truly know the invisible God. And the Gospel reveals a truth that goes against our thoughts and feelings, being completely contrary to them. For by nature we believe we must approach God with an obedience of faith that is our works. But the true obedience of faith by which we approach God is not our works, *but faith in the works of another*, namely Jesus, God’s Son, our Savior. For it is Him, as a true man, living the perfectly obedient faith under the Law and the Father’s will even unto death upon a cross so that, as true God His perfect obedience is credited to you even as your sins were placed upon Him and paid for in full.

But do not our sins condemn us? Are we not to do good works? In other words, aren’t we supposed to be obedient to the Law? Of course, we are! As it has been well-said, they are the Ten Commandments, not the Ten Suggestions. But the First Commandment itself *requires faith*. Faith in the mysteries that have been revealed in the Gospel. Faith in the Triune God. Faith in the Father’s Son as the Savior, that is, in His completed work, His cry of “It is finished!” His perfect obedience and righteousness covering you, His blood cleansing you from every sin.

This faith in the Gospel, the message of salvation in Christ crucified and risen, is what is necessary to approach God, and even this faith is a gift given to you, for faith itself is not a work of man, but of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. And it never becomes, “Jesus did His part, now you do yours.” Thus Paul writes that God “is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ.”<sup>x</sup>

The Gospel contains information, truly it reveals the mysteries of God and salvation. But the Gospel is not merely information. It is the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe it.<sup>xi</sup> It is the means, the tool, the instrument, by which the Holy Spirit strengthens your faith, your love for God and others, and your hope of salvation. Through the Gospel that comes to you in the Word, in the preaching, in the Absolution, and in the Holy Sacraments, the Holy Spirit gives to you again and again the forgiveness of sins which Jesus won for you, covers you with Christ’s righteousness, and enlightens your heart and mind and empowers your will to guard your faith in a world in which you are surrounded by false doctrine and temptations to sin and evil, a world in which affliction and suffering of body and soul, persecution for your faith and, finally, death are harsh realities to be faced. Thus it is an amazing Gospel revelation that assures us, “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”<sup>xii</sup> Our salvation, from beginning to end, is not in our weak hands, but safely in the almighty and gracious hands of our Heavenly Father, our Good Shepherd, and their Holy Spirit.<sup>xiii</sup>

It is because the Gospel reveals the mystery of salvation through faith alone in Christ Jesus, faith in His perfect obedience of faith, that our obedience of faith, believing in Jesus, can and does produce faithful obedience in us. Knowing God in Christ Jesus, the Child born of Mary, the Son of Man crucified and risen, the mystery of our relationship to God is revealed. We don’t climb to Him, we couldn’t, so He descends to us. As His works in life and death are perfect, we don’t need to wonder if ours are “enough” in either quantity or quality. Being freed from the uncertainty of our salvation, we have been freed to truly fight temptation, resist sin, and love others as we would have them love us. Yes, faith produces obedience, but not as a part of the tree, faith plus works, but as good fruits of a good tree, faith brings forth good works.

Mysteries can be interesting and fun. But mysteries concerning God and salvation, as they deal with heaven and hell, make *any* uncertainty terrifying. No wonder then that St. Paul can’t help but cry out, “To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!”<sup>xiv</sup> He calls for eternal praises to the only God, who alone is wise, and who has shown His wisdom through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For in Jesus all uncertainty is removed as the mystery of our salvation is revealed in the Father’s gift of His Son. No wonder then that after hearing this Gospel again, we hear Paul’s doxology and, in the obedience of faith, can’t help but cry out with him, “Amen!”<sup>xv</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Romans 1:22. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>ii</sup> Romans 16:26.

<sup>iii</sup> Genesis 3:15.

<sup>iv</sup> Romans 16:26.

<sup>v</sup> Deuteronomy 18:15.

<sup>vi</sup> Isaiah 7:14; 9:6.

<sup>vii</sup> Isaiah 53:5-6.

<sup>viii</sup> Micah 5:2.

<sup>ix</sup> Matthew 1:21.

<sup>x</sup> Romans 16:25.

<sup>xi</sup> Romans 10:16.

<sup>xii</sup> Philippians 1:6.

<sup>xiii</sup> Cf. John 10:28-30.

<sup>xiv</sup> Romans 16:27.

<sup>xv</sup> Ibid.



**Fourth Sunday in Advent (B)**  
**24 December 2023**

**Presentation of the Offering**

Lord Jesus, You gave Yourself unselfishly for our salvation; the gift You now require from us is ourselves: all that we are and all that we have. Savior, here from our hearts we bring this offering to Your altar. Accept it and use it as You see fit. It, along with all things, rightfully belongs to You. Amen.

**Collect of the Day**

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Prayer of the Church—Ektene Form**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For faith like that of the blessed Virgin Mary, God's servant, who believed Gabriel's Word and received the miraculous gift of God's Son, our Immanuel, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Word of God, sent forth into the world to the joy and edification of His holy people, that by it many who do not know Christ may come to faith, be comforted and strengthened with us, and sing to His name and extol His goodness, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For Matthew, our Synod president; Michael, our district president; Timothy, our circuit visitor and pastor, that like the angel Gabriel, they may be faithful messengers of His Good News, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all pregnant women and mothers of young children, that the Lord's favor would rest upon them and that they may rejoice in the blessing of new life He gives, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That leaders who have a heart and mind like David may arise among us to govern our land faithfully under Christ, the Lord of lords, and that they would work towards limiting evil and bringing peace in our nation and the world, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For Elizabeth, Bruce, Debbie, Paula, Jim, Jim, Joyce, Don, Michael, Betty, Arlyn, Jessica, Lynne, Shandel, Russell, Jodi, Marilyn, Ron, Aaron, Laurie, Drew, Paul, Carolyn, Scott, Marilyn, and all who suffer in mind or body, that Christ, our Immanuel, would be with them in their trials and grant health and healing in accord with His perfect will, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For Roy and Linda White, that our heavenly Father would bless them in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**