



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024

WELCOME

to St. Mary's Episcopal Church

a member of the Central Michigan Episcopal Covenant

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Big Rapids, MI

Seeking every day to love God
with our whole heart, mind, and soul, and
to love our neighbors as ourselves.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Cadillac, MI

We strive to live out the Great
Commandment: To love the Lord with all
our heart, soul, and mind and to love our
neighbors as ourselves.

If you have a faith or are seeking one, you are always welcome here.

If you are visiting or looking for a spiritual home,
we'd love to get to know you.

MORNING PRAYER, ENRICHING OUR WORSHIP

Opening Sentence

Officiant Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also. *Isaiah 45:8*

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Lighting the Way Advent Devotional

As the first candle is lit, all say

**All A candle is a lovely thing to light for Him today.
A brave new candle straight and tall to make the darkness light.**

As the second candle is lit, all say

**All So fine was He, so tall and straight that all the world was lit,
A pathway widening out ahead, as he walked into it.**

As the third candle is lit, all say

**All Candles burning in the night, are symbols of the one
Who shed a glow of radiant light until His work was done.**

As the fourth candle is lit, all say

**All Four candles now are shining bright in loveliness and cheer,
To help us all remember that Christ's Birthday now is near.**

Leader To accept the great gift of Christmas, your son Jesus;

People Prepare our hearts, O God

Leader To listen quietly that we might hear the message of the angels,
Peace on earth, Good will to men;

People Prepare our hearts, O God

Leader That we might follow the example of the shepherds
and seek the Christ Child, wherever he may be;

People Prepare our hearts, O God

Leader That we, like Christ, may grow in stature, wisdom and in your favor;
People Prepare our hearts, O God

Confession and Absolution

Officiant Let us confess our sins to God. *All kneel as able. Silence may be kept.*

All God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

The Invitatory and Psalter *All stand as able.*

Officiant O God, let our mouth proclaim your praise.

People And your glory all the day long.

All Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

Invitatory Psalm: Psalm 67:1-5

All Our God and Savior now draws near: O come let us worship.

O God, be merciful to us and bless us,
show us the light of your countenance and come to us.
Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

The Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7

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After the Psalm:

All Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

The Lessons

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First Reading

Micha 5:2-5a

After the reading: Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
 People Thanks be to God.

Canticle 15: The Song of Mary

Said in unison

**All My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in you, O God my Savior,
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your name.**

You have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.
You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the help of your servant Israel,
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,
The promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:5-10

After the reading: Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
 People Thanks be to God.

Canticle R: A Song of God's Love, *1 John 4:7-11*

Said in unison

All Beloved, let us love one another, * for love is of God.
Whoever does not love does not know God, *
for God is Love.
In this the love of God was revealed among us, *
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through Jesus Christ.
In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us *
and sent his Son that sins might be forgiven.
Beloved, since God loved us so much, *
we ought also to love one another.
For if we love one another, God abides in us, *
and God's love will be perfected in us.

Third Reading

Luke 1:39-45, [46-55]

After the reading: Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
 People **Thanks be to God.**

Reflection *The reflection may be a time of silence, a homily, or reading of a text.*

The Apostles' Creed *Said by all, standing as able.*

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will
come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion
of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the
life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers *The people stand or kneel as able.*

Officiant Hear our cry, O God.
People **And listen to our prayer.**
Officiant Let us pray.

The Lord's Prayer *Said in unison*

It is our tradition to gather in a circle to say the Lord's Prayer. You are welcome to either stand and join hands, or remain seated and we will encircle you.

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.

The Peace *All stand as able.*

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Suffrages A

Officiant Help us, O God our Savior;

People **Deliver us and forgive us our sins.**

Officiant Look upon your congregation;

People **Give to your people the blessing of peace.**

Officiant Declare your glory among the nations;

People **And your wonders among all peoples.**

Officiant Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;

People **Never forget the lives of your poor.**

Officiant Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

People **And your favor to those who are true of heart.**

Officiant Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

People **So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.**

The Collect of the Day

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The Prayers of the People

Hear Our Prayer

Intercessor May our hearts leap for joy as we again assemble in prayer to await the Lord's coming. With Mary, may our souls proclaim God's greatness as we say, "Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**"

Let us pray for the church: As the celebration of your incarnation draws near, we remember the many ways your revelation is lifted up in the world and we pray for our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the world, and especially for those whose very faith endangers their lives. We pray for Sean, our Presiding Bishop; Skip, our Assisting Bishop; Nurya, our canon; Radha, our Rector; our Central Michigan Episcopal Covenant. St. Paul's, Saginaw - Judy, Rector; Holy Trinity, Wyoming – Rob, Senior Warden; Church of the Nativity, Boyne City - Kathryn, Senior Warden. We pray for all those in our diocese discerning calls to ministry, both lay and ordained. In particular, we pray for those in our dioceses preparing for the Sacred Order of Priests, including Abraham, John, Laurie, Jonathan, Kathryn, Stephanie, Thon, Jess, Julianne, Matt, Cathy, Kris, Theresa, Janet. We pray also for those in our dioceses preparing for the Sacred Order of Deacons, including: Jennifer, Chris, Laura, Deb, Paige. We remember with gratitude the retired clergy of the diocese. *Silence* Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor For an end to violence, oppression, and injustice: As you lead us, Lord, from darkness to light, may we be among those who exalt the lowly and fill the hungry with good things, rooting out the proud of heart and drawing courage from the power of your arm. *Silence*
Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor We pray for those in positions of authority in our country and in the world, especially Joe, our president; Gretchen our governor; Fred, our mayor. *Silence* Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor For our own spirits: may our hearts be magnified and made much bigger than we think possible. May this season of Advent stir in us such faith that we exert ourselves to be your light in a darkened world.

Silence Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor For this community: may we be enriched by welcoming the stranger and be drawn to a bright future in service to you, while also remembering and honoring those in the past who guided us into faith.

Silence Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor For the sick and suffering. May they find healing and peace. Especially we pray for those in the St. Mary's circle of prayer: J.P., Erin, Jimmy, Keith, Ken, Jerry & Karlene, Kelsay, Heather, Joey, Bruce; For those in the St. Andrew's circle of prayer: Betty, Donna, Marty, Rachel, Gordon, Katsi, Kris, Bob, Bill, Janie, Bill, Scott & Laura, Harry & Melissa, Chris, Jerry, Helen & Raymond Jr., Raymond Sr.; For our family and friends in the armed forces and who are first responders: Wesley, Owen, Richard, Corey, Matt, Teylor, Tony, Kim, Drew, Jon, Sabastian, Noah, Eli, Jess; And for all those we name at this time. *Silence*

Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor For the dead and those on the threshold of death, confident in your promise to be with us always. May they and we be welcomed into the place of glory our Lord has prepared for us. *Silence*
Lord in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Officiant Lord, we gather up the prayers of this household, confident in your promise to be with us always. Guide us in wisdom and faith; that we might live into the life created for us, trusting in your will. All this we ask through your Son, our redeemer, Jesus, who is your Christ. **Amen.**

The General Thanksgiving *Said in unison* **BCP p. 101**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

The Celebration of Special Days and Announcements

For a Birthday	Pew Card
For an Anniversary	BCP 431, first prayer
Travelers	BCP 831, #53

The Dismissal and Concluding Sentence

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Officiant Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Ephesians 3:20,21



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