

December 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday in Advent¹
Awestruck Anticipation

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PRELUDE

The Realms of the Angels Glory

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Pastor: The first candle in our advent wreath is lit for the first time Jesus came to earth.

All people: *A shining example of how we should live.*

Pastor: The second candle is lit for the Second Coming of Christ.

All people: *When God will remake, renew, and restore all creation.*

Pastor: The third candle in our advent wreath,

All people: *Reminds us of our active role in lighting the way as we patiently wait.*

Pastor: The fourth candle we light today, shines bright like Mary's willing heart.

She thought herself weak, and yet she obeyed.

She was strong and brave to play her part.

All people: *Like Mary, we welcome you into our lives.*

Pastor: Let our souls give glory to our God.

All people: *Like Mary, make us brave to share your love.*

Pastor: *Let our souls pour out their praise!*

CALL TO WORSHIP ***Brought Down, Lifted Up***² (Poem Video)

He brought down princes from their mighty thrones,
he lifted up the humble and the meek.

When God descended, took on flesh and bones,
emptied himself of power, chose to be weak,
he brought down princes from their mighty thrones.

When God the Word had not yet learned to speak,
and in his mother's arms made cries and moans,
he lifted up the humble and the meek.

He brought down princes from their mighty thrones.
He lifted up the humble and the meek.

¹ Hargraves, Sara, and Sam. *Worship in the Waiting*, an Advent worship resource was purchased by Pastor Laura and is shared from her library of material. The Hargraves wrote this material for **engage** worship - a ministry of Music and Worship Foundation CIO. Copyright permission to print and use in-person and online is granted upon purchase.

² Amy Scott Robinson. Written for *Worship in the Waiting*.

ADVENT HYMN

*My Soul Gives Glory to My God*³

(Tune: Morning Song)

My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.

My God has done great things for me: yes, holy is God's name.
All people will declare me blessed, and blessings they shall claim.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-38, 46-55

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, ^[a] favored woman! The Lord is with you! ^[b]"

²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰ "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel ^[c] forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For the word of God will never fail. ^[d]"

³⁸ Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

⁴⁶ Mary responded,

"Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

⁴⁷ How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

⁴⁸ For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

⁴⁹ For the Mighty One is holy,
and he has done great things for me.

⁵⁰ He shows mercy from generation to generation
to all who fear him.

³ Miriam Therese Winter, the author who paraphrased the "Canticle of Mary" also known as the Magnificat or Mary's song, while she was a doctoral candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1978. Winter is a Medical Mission sister (nun) who has been writing religious songs since Vatican II (1962-1965).

- ⁵¹ His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
- ⁵² He has brought down princes from their thrones
and exalted the humble.
- ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.
- ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel
and remembered to be merciful.
- ⁵⁵ For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

SERMON

Shrinky-Dink God...

Rev. Laura C. Bair

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Jesus, Humble King, we remember that your family was away from home when you were born.

All people: Please be with the homeless, the refugees and those who are struggling to make ends meet this Christmas. Please be with those who are in long term care facilities, those whose travel is restricted, and all who due to COVID are lonely. Jesus, Humble King, we long for your Kingdom here, on earth as it is in heaven. Let your Kingdom come; let your will be done.

Pastor: Jesus, King of Kings, we remember that powerful leaders visited you when you were born.

All people: Give your wisdom, boldness and grace to our world leaders, to politicians, to business people and communities leaders, to all who have influence. King of Kings, establish your Kingdom here, on earth as it is in heaven. Let your Kingdom come; let your will be done.

Pastor: Jesus, King of Peace, we remember King Herod’s jealousy, his lies and violence when you were born.

All people: Bring your peace in places of conflict, anger and hatred, across the world and right here in our communities and homes. King of peace, we pray for your Kingdom here, on earth as it is in heaven. Let your Kingdom come; let your will be done. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

*A Hallelujah Christmas*⁴ **Guitarist & Soloist, Faye Schaeffer**

⁴ Leonard Cohen is the original composer of the iconic “Hallelujah.” Despite its biblical allusions, Cohen’s original version is cryptic and not typically perceived as glorifying God. The Christian band, Cloverton, embraced the “Hallelujah” melody but changed the lyrics to perform what is aptly called “A Hallelujah Christmas” which details Jesus’ birth and theological meaning. Thank you, Faye Schaeffer, for sharing your love for God and musical talent, which blesses us abundantly.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Hallelujah! The wait is almost over; Christmas is nearly here!

All people: Emmanuel is about to be born.

Pastor: So, go out, aware that God is with you.

All people: The wait is almost over; Christmas is nearly here!

Pastor: The King who has come, and who will come again, sends you out to demonstrate his Kingdom on earth.

All people: The long-expected King, born to the sound of angels singing, sends us out to worship him with your lives.

Pastor: The King who was born poor and humble, sends you out to serve those who are weak and needy in the world.

All people: The wait is almost over; Christmas is nearly here!

Hallelujah!

Amen.

POSTLUDE

In Anticipation (Knight)