



SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

306 N. Division Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 • (734) 663-0518 • www.standrewsaa.org

Sunday, December 20, 2020 *The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

Dear friends:

"Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary were not filled with wishes. They were filled with hope. Hope is something very different. Hope is trusting that something will be fulfilled, but fulfilled according to the promises and not just our wishes. Therefore, hope is always open-ended. I have found it very important in my own life to let go of my wishes and start hoping. It was only when I was willing to let go of wishes that something really new, something beyond my own expectations, could happen to me.

To wait open-endedly is an enormously radical attitude toward life. So is to trust that something good will happen to us that is far beyond our own imaginings. So, too, is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life, trusting that God molds us according to God's love and not according to our fear. The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction. That, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control."

Henri Nouwen: "A Spirituality of Waiting: Being Alert to God's Presence in Our Lives," Weavings, January/February 1987.

Our journey through Advent is drawing to a close, our waiting is nearly over, Christmas will soon be here. In most years Christmas gets weighed down by a lot of expectations that have little to do with the birth of the son of God in Bethlehem. Part of that is a well-intentioned desire to make the holiday special; part of it is due to the manipulations of mass marketing and merchandising. This year the holiday will again bear a certain heaviness. It's just that the weight will come from different sources: separation from family and friends, celebrations that are vastly different from those to which we are accustomed, and a higher level of uncertainty about the health of our world and its future. Much of this is largely beyond our individual control; which may not be such a bad thing if we can see that through it all, God is in control, just as God was on that first Christmas. Expectations are formed and fed by one of two things: Fear or Love. That's as true for how we approach a day like Christmas as it is for what we do with the gift of Christmas. What fuels our expectations?

A child was born, not to instill fear, but to make love a reality. God knew what God was doing then, as God does now. Can we trust that?

May this Christmas be the time we whole-heartedly trust in God and receive the gift of the Christ-child in its fullness to become people of hope and love. What a wonderful gift that would be to a world that is expecting far less.

God bless, *Fr. Alan*

Sunday, December 20

- ▶ [WATCH THE SERVICE](#) at 10:00 am
- ▶ **COFFEE HOUR** on Zoom at 10:45 am

Navigating this Service

Use our [Morning Prayer text](#) or follow the Book of Common Prayer, pg. 75.



Christmas

AT SAINT ANDREW'S

Thursday, December 24

Lessons and Carols • Christmas Pageant
Available anytime after 9:00 am on YouTube

Morning Prayer will be available on YouTube as scheduled on December 6 - 13 - 20 - 27

A **Family Service** will be available on YouTube starting at 9:15 am on December 20 - 27 - January 3

Calendar

Sunday, December 20

Family Service

9:15 am on YouTube

Morning Prayer

10:00 am on YouTube

Virtual Coffee Hour

10:45 am on Zoom

Millennials + Z Brunch

12:30 pm on Zoom

CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Lessons & Carols

9:00 am on YouTube

The Christmas Pageant

9:00 am on YouTube

Sunday, December 27

Family Service

9:15 am on YouTube

Morning Prayer

10:00 am on YouTube

Virtual Coffee Hour

10:45 am on Zoom

Announcements

Thank You!

The church received 213 gift cards for donation to the Ann Arbor Community Center. Your generosity in our Adopt-a-Family project will make a difference for dozens of local families.

Upcoming Events

Family Service to tell the Christmas Story

Watch on YouTube: Starting December 20 at 9:15 am

The Christmas Story will be told this year as part of a special virtual presentation of the Family Service! While Virtual Church School is on winter break you can join Fr. Alan and the Rev. Sally as they tell the Christmas Story beginning with the prophet Isaiah's message of the coming of the Messiah, through Christ's birth and the Epiphany.

This brief (~20 minutes) virtual service will be available December 20, December 27, and January 3 on YouTube starting at 9:15 am and can be watched at any time for your convenience.

The Family Service will be held in place of Virtual Church School on the above dates only. Virtual lessons resume on Sunday, January 10 for Church School and Wednesday, January 6 for Youth Groups.



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The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Prelude: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953)

Opening Hymn: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Hymnal, no. 66



1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art:
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone;



from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Opening Sentences

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 78

Confession

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 79


Preces

Hymnal, no. S-33
Book of Common Prayer, pg. 80

Invitatory

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Cantor; then People



Come and save us, O Lord God of hosts.

Cantor

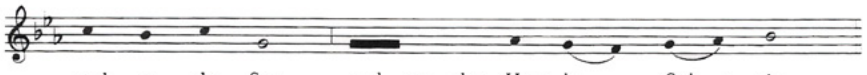


Show the light of your coun - te - nance, and we shall be saved:

People *Cantor*



O Lord God of hosts. Glo - ry to the Fa - ther,




and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spi - rit.

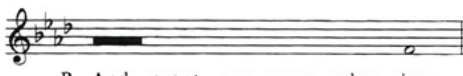
People



Come and save us, O Lord God of hosts.



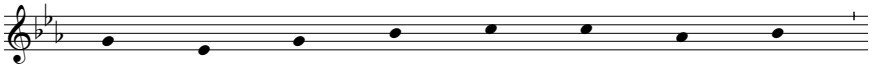
V. Show us your mer - cy, O Lord:



R. And grant us your salva - tion.

Hymn: *Creator of the Stars of Night*

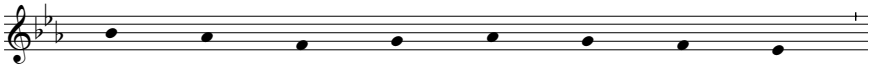
Hymnal, no. 60



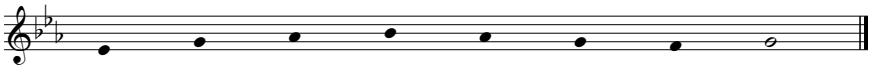
1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night,
 2 In sor - row that the an - cient curse
 3 When this old world drew on toward night,
 4 At your great Name, O Je - sus, now
 5 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray,
 * 6 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son,



1 your peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing light,
 2 should doom to death a u - ni - verse,
 3 you came; but not in splen - dor bright,
 4 all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
 5 re - deem us for e - ter - nal day;
 6 and God the Spi - rit, Three in One,



1 O Christ, Re - deem - er of us all,
 2 you came, O Sa - vior, to set free
 3 not as a mon - arch, but the child
 4 all things on earth with one ac - cord,
 5 de - fend us while we dwell be - low
 6 praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



1 we pray you hear us when we call.
 2 your own in glo - rious li - ber - ty.
 3 of Ma - ry, blame - less mo - ther mild.
 4 like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.
 5 from all as - saults of our dread foe.
 6 from age to age e - ter - nal - ly.

Canticle 15

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
 my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *

for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *

in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *

he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

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

Old Testament: II Samuel 7:1-11, 16

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 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 and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 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 to be prince over my people Israel; 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. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Sermon

Felicity Thompson

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Good morning!

I am Felicity Thompson, a member of St. Andrew's and a candidate in formation for the diaconate. I am a member of the altar guild and usually attend the 10 o'clock service on Sundays.

It's cold outside, the trees are bare and as I drive around town I enjoy the lights and other decorations for Christmas. Usually at this time of the year, I am busy making multiple lists. I am driving from Ann Arbor to Oak Park, Detroit, Novi, Troy, north to Saginaw and other places. These trips take me to family, work and various retail stores in my attempt to make Christmas enjoyable and somewhat magical for my family. I spend hours wrapping gifts and cooking delicious meals as we have birthdays and anniversaries that my family also celebrates this month. As if that isn't enough my calendar is filled with holiday events like Handel's *Messiah* at Hill Auditorium, a performance

of *The Nutcracker* at the Fox Theatre competing with important services at church like our traditional Sunday services celebrating Advent and the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols. Why, may I ask? It's just what we do.

We will miss physically attending all the events this year, but some can be watched virtually. This year I will not miss waiting for Joseph to get back from work, impatiently asking for his estimated time of arrival; waiting for him to get dressed; driving around in the cold looking for parking downtown; then finally taking our seats exhausted but happy to be present and doing the same thing all over again a few days later. Looking back, I ask myself, "what was so enjoyable about that?"

In our gospel reading today, Luke tells a story about a quiet encounter between a young woman and an angel. The weather isn't cold, the trees aren't bare. The nights are cool and the days are mild. The trees have their leaves and the climate is semi arid. This young woman is not feeling the stress of a season filled with multiple events to attend, gifts to wrap and meals to prepare. No, she is at home in a town called Nazareth, resting, when the angel appears. According to Luke, the angel startles her with this message, "Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you." Mary is confused as the angel, Gabriel, continues with, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David." Mary is engaged and she is a virgin. How will this happen? Gabriel tells 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 holy; he will be called Son of God." As she is listening, her heart is racing, as she wonders how to explain this encounter with Joseph and the rest of her family, Gabriel has more news. He tells Mary, her much older relative, Elizabeth is going to have her first baby "in her old age". In fact she has been pregnant for six months.

Both of these pregnancies were unlikely. Mary is a virgin and Elizabeth is an old woman, what will people in their small towns say? Young Mary has been thrust into an unexpected pregnancy while Elizabeth's long awaited answer to her prayer for a pregnancy is finally fulfilled. With God, nothing is impossible!

This Advent, as we participate in St. Andrew's services virtually; continue to support the ministries of our church. Put up your tree, play your Christmas music, bake some cookies and wear your mask. As we wait patiently for

Christmas, create a space of peace and love, pray for the souls of those who left us too soon this year, social distance and wash your hands. In the midst of the pandemic, turn down the volume of your TV so you can hear God.

Everyone wants to return to “life as it used to be”. We want the medical community to have a cure for the coronavirus now. We want everyone vaccinated right now. We want to be able to enjoy meals at the restaurants with our friends and families, shop for hours at the malls, hang out at movie theaters and worship in our churches. There is talk to hurry up and move into the new year as this year holds so many bad memories. Stop! Let’s be still, quiet and restful. This is an important time that cannot be rushed. This fourth Sunday of Advent, open your heart to allow God to use you to do something impossible. Celebrate this time. Be prayerful. Be safe.

Apostles Creed

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 96

The Prayers

Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Hymn: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

Hymnal, no. 265

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from hea - ven came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed Mo - ther thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Ma - ry meek - ly bowed her head,
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born

his wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame;
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said,
 in Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn,

"All hail," said he, "thou low - ly maid - en Ma - ry,
 thy Son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "my soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly Name."
 and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say—

most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - al
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - al
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - al
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - al

Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Concluding Versicle

Hymnal, no. S-54

Closing Hymn: *Lo! He Comes, with Clouds Descending* Hymnal, no. 57



1 Lo! he comes, with clouds de - scend - ing, once for
 2 Ev - ery eye shall now be - hold him, robed in
 3 Those dear tok - ens of his pas - sion still his
 4 Yea, a - men! let all a - dore thee, high on



our sal - va - tion slain; thou - sand thou - sand
 dread - ful ma - jes - ty; those who set at
 daz - zling bo - dy bears, cause of end - less
 thine e - ter - nal throne; Sa - vior, take the



saints at - tend - ing swell the tri - umph of his
 nought and sold him, pierced, and nailed him to the
 ex - ul - ta - tion to his ran - somed wor - ship -
 power and glo - ry; claim the king - dom for thine



train: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 tree, deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly wail - ing,
 ers; with what rap - ture, with what rap - ture,
 own: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
 deep - ly wail - ing, shall the true Mes - si - ah see.
 with what rap - ture gaze we on those glo - rious scars!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone.

Postlude: *Veni Emmanuel*

arr. Robert J. Powell (b. 1932)