



December 5, 2021

St. Matthew's Episcopal Cathedral
Laramie, Wyoming

Prelude

by Valentina Gavrilova

Hymn

#657 "Love divine, all loves excelling"

Gathering

Not in the mighty places of power,
but in little Bethlehem,
in a room out back:

The Messiah is coming.

Not born in nobility and wealth,
but of Mary and Joseph,
who pondered and planed wood:

The Messiah is coming.

Not announced by prophets, priests, and kings,
but by two women,
who were the first to know:

The Messiah is coming.

Nothing will be impossible for God,
but when and where we least expect it,
look among the straw and the stars:

The Messiah is coming.

Lighting Candles

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true:
to you be praise and glory for ever.

Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets, but in our days you speak through your Son,
whom you have appointed the heir of all things.

Grant us, your people, to walk in his light, that we may be found ready and watching
when he comes again in glory and judgment; for you are our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

**Lord Jesus, light of the world, the prophets said you would bring peace and save your people in trouble.
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas and show all the world God's love. Amen.**

People of God: be glad! Your God delights in you, giving you joy for sadness
and turning the dark to light. Be strong in hope therefore; for your God comes to save.
You are God's children. Lord, make us one in the love of Christ today and for ever.

Amen.

Two Advent candles are lit.

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

First Reading

A Reading from Malachi (3:1-4).

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Canticle 16 *The Song of Zechariah*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
 he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
 born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from our enemies, *
 from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
 and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *
 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
 holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
 by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
 the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
 and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Second Reading

A Reading from Philipians (1:3-11).

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

#76 "On Jordan's bank"

Gospel

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (3:1-6).

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Dialogue Sermon

The Rev's. Chris and Paul Mottl

An Affirmation of Faith for Advent

We stand.

I believe in God, who bends and kneels toward our world, drenching it in love, making it new with every breath. I believe in Jesus, God become human, who brought every person a spark of the divine. I believe in the Spirit, hovering God, present among us, abiding, upholding, awaking all things to God's grace. I believe we are called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God and each other, ready for God's reign, awake and alert, as we work to bring it near. I believe we are called as Christmas comes close, to lift up our hearts in hope and in love, seeking God's advent in each moment and person, each challenge and heartache, each blessing and joy. This I promise to do. Keep us faithful, Lord Jesus, and come soon. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. Prepare your hearts for his arrival, praying, "Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *come, great Redeemer, come.*"

Merciful God, increase our love to overflowing. Make your Church pure and blameless that we may greet with joy the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *Come, great Redeemer, come.*

Merciful God, we long for the light of hope to break into our world, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide us into the way of peace. Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *Come, great Redeemer, come.*

Merciful God, give us grace to heed the warnings of those calling us to be better stewards of your creation. We thank you for all you have made, especially those things that sustain and better our lives. Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *Come, great Redeemer, come.*

Merciful God, you lead us with joy; you delight in our joy. You clothe us in beauty. We give you thanks for your tender care. Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *Come, great Redeemer, come.*

Merciful God, you remember your children. You do not leave us in sorrow or affliction. Today we pray especially for, Mary, Char, Mei, Carol, Kelly, Deb, Helene, Tiffany, Barbara, Christopher, Tuller, Nina, Marigold, Brad, Mel, Geoff, Judith, Lucas, Justin, Danny, Mike, Jen, Julie, and _____ Crown your children with glory; clothe them with righteousness. Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *Come, great Redeemer, come.*

Merciful God, you have raised up for us salvation through your Son. Keep us, with all your saints, in the eternal life of Christ. Fill the valleys, make low the hills; *Come, great Redeemer, come.*

Almighty God, as your blessed Son Jesus Christ first came to seek and to save the lost, so may he come again to find in us the completion of his redeeming work; for he is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **Amen**

The Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive you all your sins, open your eyes to God's truth, strengthen you to do God's will, and give you the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

We greet each other in the name of the Lord.

Invitation to the Offering

God has enriched us in every way— in speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts. From the fellowship of Jesus Christ, we are sent out to share with thanksgiving what we have received.

Hymn

#423 “Immortal, invisible”

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us.

Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God.

To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine.

Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made. In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.
AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Now, as Jesus taught us, we pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

The presider breaks the bread. Silence is kept.

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

**We who are many are one body,
for we all share the one bread.**

Bread and wine; the gifts of God for the people of God.

**May we who share these gifts
be found in Christ and Christ in us.**

The Communion

This is the Lord's table where ALL are welcome.

If you would prefer to receive a blessing rather than communion, please come forward and cross your arms over your chest. If you do not wish to receive wine please know that receiving only the bread is still a full communion

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

God of new beginnings, you draw near to us in word and sacrament to strengthen and renew us; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit. May your light so shine through us that all may welcome your Son at his coming. We ask this in the name of Jesus Emmanuel. Amen.

Blessing

May the God of mercy keep you, the Holy Spirit cheer you, and Christ in glory greet you, now and at the day of his coming. And may the blessing of Almighty God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier be with you now and always. **Amen.**

Hymn

#411 "O bless the Lord, my soul!"

Sending

As we await our coming Savior,
go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Postlude

by Valentina Gavrilova

