

**ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH**

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## ADVENT 4

Sunday, December 19, 2021

# Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 19, 2021

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

## THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

**Processional:**        *O Come Divine Messiah*

**#95 HB**

**THE GREETING:**        Rev. Simon Bell

**Celebrant:**        The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

**People:**        **And also with you.**

**Celebrant:**        Almighty God,

**All:**        **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

### **Fourth Sunday of Advent Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

**Celebrant:**        Today, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, we also light the candle of Love. Love is patient, love is kind. Love is never rude or selfish. Love is not quick to take offense and keeps no records of wrongs. Love rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is no limit to its faith, to its hope, or to its endurance. Love never ends.

**People:**        **God's perfect love is revealed to us in Jesus, for God so loved the world that he sent Jesus into the world, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

**Celebrant:**        We light this candle today to remind us that God is love. We thank God for the hope he gives us, for the peace he shares with us, for the joy he pours into our hearts, and for the love that redeems us and shows us the way.

### *Light the fourth candle of LOVE*

**Celebrant:**        Let us pray:

**People:**        **Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship. Help us to hear and do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

## **THE COLLECT OF THE DAY** (Prayer of the Day)

**All:**           **Heavenly Father, who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour, now fill us with your grace, that we in all things may embrace your will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

## **THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD**

### **FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a**

#### **A READING FROM THE BOOK OF MICAH**

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord.

**People:**       **Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: 80:1-7**

**REFRAIN: Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might and come to save us! **R**

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. **R**

O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? **R**

You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. **R**

You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves. **R**

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved. **R**

**SECOND READING:        Hebrews 10:5-10**

**A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS**

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.

And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

**People:        Thanks be to God.**

**THE HOLY GOSPEL:        Luke 1:39-55**

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE**

**People:        Glory to You Lord Jesus Christ**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And, blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The Gospel of Christ.

**People:        Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ**

**The magnificence of obedience****Micah 5:205a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke1:39-55**

Christian faith often gets presented to us as a life of sacrifice. We often get asked the question, “What do I need to give up in order to be a follower of Jesus?” In essence we present the Christian life as one of denial – one in which we give stuff up in some grandly sacrificial way in order to prove how faithful we are. In essence we then value folk, like St. Francis of Assisi or Mother Theresa, because they have given up so much in order to serve God. We glorify their sacrificial commitment and hold it up as a key value, without recognizing the value that precedes it and that is really the basis of all the life-style choices we make – namely obedience.

In essence the Christian worldview does not start with the question, “What can I sacrifice for God?” It starts with the question “How can I obey God?” Part of that life of obedience might ask us to act sacrificially but living sacrificially is the product of obedience.

**The obedience of Christ**

In I Samuel King Saul is commanded to go into battle against the Amalekites and told to completely destroy them by the prophet Samuel. But Saul, in his own wisdom, decided that it would be worthwhile to destroy the people and to keep all their wealth. On their way back home, they encounter Samuel who asks why they had kept this wealth in livestock, Saul responds that they had kept it in order to sacrifice to God. Samuel responds, “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams’ (I Samuel 15:22).

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews picks up on that same theme in talking of Christ offering himself once for all. He draws on Psalm 40 and in doing so points out that the central theme of Christ’s life is not sacrifice, but obedience. In reference to the Psalm, Christ fulfills both the Law and the constant reminder of our sinfulness or fractured existence that the ritual of sacrifice offered. In this sense what Christ offered us in obedience was the ultimate shout-out of our fracturedness and the ultimate conclusion to its resolve. The emphasis here is not on what Christ sacrificed, as significant as that was, but rather on the obedience (even to death) to God that he displayed.

In essence Christ embodied the Psalm - “I have come to do your will” – in the incarnation that we remember at Christmas. It is in this sense that Christ demonstrated true obedience in living all of life in humble submission to God. It is this very point that the writer of Philippians is making when he suggests to us that Christ emptied himself in the incarnation as an act of obedience. It is in this sense that the entire life of Christ, not just his death, brings significance to us. That his birth is just as much an event of significance as his death and resurrection. That Christmas holds as equal value as Good Friday and Easter Sunday in the church calendar when seen from the perspective of obedience.

Then, as the writer of Hebrews indicates, our significance is not to be found in some presupposed sacrificial life, as if we could add to the fullness of what Christ offered, but in us humbly living out or embodying the will of God in our own lives (vs. 10). This embodiment of God’s will is to be found in us giving ourselves over to God’s grace and mercy as a simple act of surrender and submission. Thus, in contrast to us thinking we need to give ourselves sacrificially to God or for others, we need to submit ourselves to God’s grace, love and favour.

Within all the warped gender stereo-types of Mary our culture has produced there is something profoundly true about the wonderful obedience Mary demonstrates. In this passage in Luke that we refer to as the Magnificent there is a starting premise for bringing Christ in the world. The starting premise is not sacrificial giving, as if Mary had to ask what she had to give up or offer, but one of pure obedience motivated by a response to God’s

grace and favour. This hymn of worship begins from the premise of Mary, as an act of obedience, in receiving God's grace – "he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant" (vs.48).

This obedience does not make Mary some form of wretched, pitiful character who is flagellated by self-denial and on whom God takes pity. Rather she is one who in obedient submission finds herself blessed by God and humanity. It is for this very reason that her cousin Elizabeth proclaims, "Blessed are you amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (vs.42).

So where does true obedience come from then? A sense of guilt or duty or something else? True obedience is found in love – it is a call to love and a response based on love. The writer of the letter to the church in Corinth points out, "If I give all up to the poor and surrender my body to the flames" – in other words offer the greatest level of sacrifice – "but have not love, I gain nothing" (13:3). In other words, even obedience to death that is not motivated by love is worthless!

Both Mary and Christ demonstrate to us the true nature of obedience motivated by love and devotion – Mary in her willingness to bring Christ into the world and Christ in his willingness to enter our world through the incarnation.

Christmas can be such a confusing time of year because of the great emphasis it puts on giving – the idea of us giving sacrificially for others. But in a sense, it is much easier for us to give sacrificially than it is to simply abandon ourselves to God in obedience. It is probably much easier, and probably more logical to us, to respond to the constant requests to give and to see Advent as a build up to us giving at Christmas, than it would be for us to see Advent as a season of penance that brings us to obedience. But the very nature of Advent is to bring us to that point of humble submission to God motivated by the recognition that we do so in response to God's love and mercy to us. My hope and prayer is that we would find a renewed sense of desire to walk in simple submission to the love and grace of God this Christmas.

**People:**            **Amen**

***(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)***

## **THE APOSTLE'S CREED**

**Celebrant:**        Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

**People:**           **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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 and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 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.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (#12):**

(In joyful expectation let us pray to our Saviour and Redeemer, saying, "**Lord Jesus, come soon!**")

**Celebrant:**        O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness; come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.

**People:** Lord Jesus, come soon!

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness.

*(Silence is kept.)*

Celebrant: Most merciful God,

**People:** 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 neighbours 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.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**People:** Amen.

## THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People:** And also with you.

# THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Hymn: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

#101 HB

## PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

**All:** Gracious God, by the power of the Spirit who sanctified the mother of your Son, make holy all we offer you this day. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

## EUCHARISTIC PRAYER #3:

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

**Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** We lift them to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** It is right to give thanks and praise.

**Celebrant:** Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in the fullness of time came among us in our flesh and opened to us the way of salvation. Now we watch for the day when he will come again in power and great triumph to judge this world, that we, without shame or fear, may rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore, we raise you, joining our voices with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

**People:** Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

**Celebrant:** We give thanks to you, Lord our God, for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son.

For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."



Therefore, Father, according to his command,

**People:**        **we remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory;**

Celebrant:      and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we, made acceptable to him, may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, reconcile all things in Christ, and made them new, and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

**People:**        **Amen.**

Celebrant:      Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:**            **Christ has died,  
Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.**

Celebrant:      Merciful Father, pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. In eating and drinking together may we be made one with Christ and with one another.

**People:**        **Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Celebrant:      And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**People:**        **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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## **BREAKING OF BREAD #5**

Celebrant:      God of promise, you prepare a banquet for us in your kingdom.

**People:**        **Happy are those who are called to the supper of the lamb.**

## **THE COMMUNION**

**Communion Hymns:**

*Lo How a Rose*

#117 HB

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

#122 HB

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**All:** Faithful God, in this sacrament we receive the promise of salvation. May we, like the Virgin Mary, be obedient to your will. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

## THE DOXOLOGY

**All:** 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.

## THE BLESSING:

**Celebrant:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

**People:** Amen.

**REMINDERS:** Birthdays/Anniversaries/Announcements

**Recessional:** *Hark a Herald Voice is Sounding*

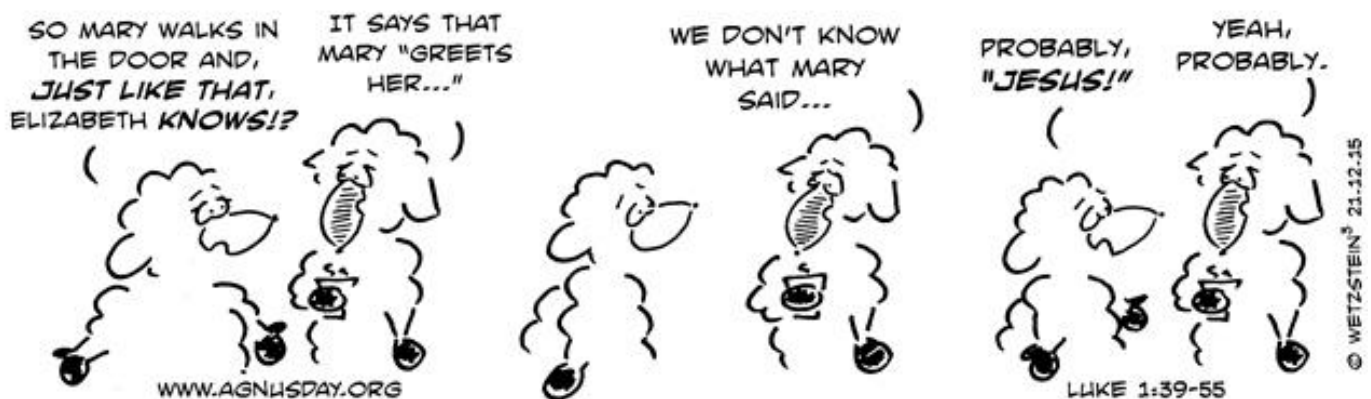
#108 HB

## THE DISMISSAL

**Leader:** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

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**Assisting Fr. Simon today:**

Celebrant/Preacher:	The Rev. Canon Simon Bell
Bread:	Fr. Simon
First Reading:	Margaret Paradis
Second Reading:	Lorraine Chew
Prayers:	Doug Court
Gospel:	Beth Steffler
Server:	Beth Steffler
Audio/Visual:	David Paradis
Music:	Craig Snider
Sidespersons:	John Snow, Kevin Lemoine
Chancel:	Joyce Antony, Eileen Cunningham

**This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:**

Shane & Shelly Finnigan and Families; Rev. Janet Mitchell; Rose McIntyre; Dave & Winnie Fulcher; Laura Johnston; Phil & Kathy C.; Cecil Nelson & Family; Cole; Stephen Bertelsen; Martin Bertelsen; Lorraine W.; Sharron Snider; Peter Hubbard; Mark Ralston; Kim Middaugh; Jackson; Sally Smith; Marilyn Lloyd; Theresa & Pete; Valerie; Darlene Jessem; Doreen; Brenda Jessem; Brenda & Brian; Derek; Jaxon Croft; Sean.

**The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:**

Adesh; Lisa Marie; Sophia L.; Joyce Antony; Pam Rees; Alvin Maynard; Dave Lawrence; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jim Tomkins; Sheila Green; Carrie Snow; Sheri Scott; Carl; Mark & Erin; Wally Raymond; Christine; Audrey Moody; Lynda Raye; Garn Mennell; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Michelle Sinclair and mom; Jane & Ron Lewis; Cecilia Mowat; Marilyn Foley; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Jen Galicinski; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Fr. Murray; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy Goodyer; Donna Wilson; Gordon Kennedy; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

**In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:**

The Church of the Province of Central Africa

**In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:**

Anglican Church Women (Enid Corbett, Diocesan President)