

## WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

**THE BIBLE** – We believe that EVERY word in the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore the whole Bible is the true, unalterable Word of God, clearly teaching the way of salvation. (2Ti. 3:15-17).

**GOD** – We believe that God is ONE (Dt. 6:4) and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons (Mt. 3:13-17), the Father, our Creator and Preserver; the Son, Jesus, Who is both God and Man, and our only Saviour; the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts and enables us to live a God-pleasing life.

**MAN** – We believe that God created man with body and soul, in His image, but man of his own free will lost this image through sin. (Gn. 1:27; 2:7; 3.)

**SIN** – “Sin is the transgression of the Law.” (1Jn 3:4). There are two kinds of sin: original (inherited) sin (Ps. 51:5) and actual sin (sin in thought, word and deed) (Mt. 15:19). Man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

**REDEMPTION** – We believe that God out of pure love and mercy redeemed mankind from sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection shows that God was satisfied with the work of Christ. (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Ro. 4:25).

**FAITH** – We believe that the sinner must personally receive the merits of Jesus for salvation and trust that, “Jesus died for me.” (Jn 17:3; Ja 1:21; Ps. 31:14).

**THE CHURCH** – We believe that the church, established by Christ is the whole number of believers in Christ, for only believers are members of the church. Jesus Christ is its one and only foundation (Ep. 2:19-22). The church is found wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution.

**SACRAMENTS** – We believe that Christ instituted two sacraments, and when Baptism is administered to infants and adults, according to the command of Christ, God offers His grace and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). In the Lord’s Supper communicants receive in, with and under the bread and wine also Christ’s body and blood. Believing communicants receive this for the forgiveness of sins (1Co. 11:24-25).

**SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** – We believe that Christ will return visibly to earth (Acts 1:11) on the Last Day (Mk. 13:32) to judge the world (Acts 10:42). The believers will go to heaven, to be with God forever (1Th. 4:13-18). The unbelievers will go to hell, eternally separated from God (Mt. 25:32, 46).

**RESURRECTION** – We believe that on the Last Day believers in Christ will rise from the dead, their souls reunited with their earthly bodies and glorified by Christ (Jn 14:19; 17:24).

# Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 18, 2022

## INTROIT

Psalm 130:5-8; Antiphon: Isaiah 64:1

*Oh that you would rend the heavens / and come down,\*  
that the mountains might quake at your / presence.  
I wait for the LORD, my / soul waits,\*  
and in his / word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the / morning,\*  
more than watchmen for the / morning.  
O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is / steadfast love,\*  
and with him is plentiful re- / demption.  
And he will redeem / Israel\*  
from all his in- / iquities.*

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son\*  
and to the Holy / Spirit;  
as it was in the be- / ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. / Amen.**

*Oh that you would rend the heavens / and come down,\*  
that the mountains might quake at your / presence.*

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

**P** *Stir up Your power, O Lord,  
And come and help us by Your might,  
that the sins which weigh us down  
may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy;  
for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.*

**G** *♪[Amen]♪*

## GRADUAL

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alt

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!  
From the house of the Lord we bless you.*

## RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

**P** *Lord, in Your mercy,*  
**G** **hear our prayer.**

## Isaiah 7:10-17 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup> And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup> The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

## Romans 1: 1-7 (ESV)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.



Zephaniah

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Isaiah 7:10–17

Romans 1:1–7

Matthew 1:18–25

### ***God's Word Is Fulfilled for Us in the Flesh and Blood of Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary***

The Fourth Sunday in Advent turns our attention toward the Nativity of Our Lord. With the Blessed Virgin Mary we await the coming of the Christ, her Son, conceived in her womb by the Word and Spirit of God. This fulfillment of the sign once given to the House of David, that “*the virgin shall conceive and bear a son*” (Is. 7:14), is now given to us in the Gospel. It declares that salvation is by His grace alone, entirely His work and a free gift. It is also the way and means by which the Lord our God is “*Immanuel,*” God-with-us. The almighty and eternal Son of God is conceived and born of St. Mary, and is thus “*descended from David according to the flesh*” (Rom. 1:3–4). He comes in this way to save us with His own flesh and blood; wherefore He is called “*Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21). As St. Joseph received this sign in faith and immediately “*did as the angel of the Lord commanded him*” (Matt. 1:24), we also live by faith in this Holy Gospel.

### ***Next Week's Readings from God's Word:***

December 25: The Nativity of our Lord – Christmas Day (Series A)  
Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 2 (v.7); Hebrews 1:1-6 (7-12); John 1:1-14 (15-18)