

## 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, believing communicants, with the bread and wine, also really receive Christ’s body and blood 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 19, 2021

## INTROIT

*1 Samuel 2:1b, 2, 5b-7; Antiphon: Luke 1:46b-47*

*My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in your salvation.  
There is none holy like the LORD;  
there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
The LORD kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low and he exalts.*

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

*My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*

## 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.*

**C** *♪[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  
Blessèd 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,*  
**C** **hear our prayer.**

### **Micah 5:2-5 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth;

then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.

### **Hebrews 10:5-10 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’ ”

<sup>8</sup> 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), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

<sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### **Luke 1:39-45 (46-56) (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

<sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

<sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

<sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty;

he has helped the poor; he has sent the rich away empty;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

## THE CHRISTMAS TREE



Satan tempted Adam and Eve and made use of the **Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil** to make sin and death enter the world.



But Jesus, in His Incarnation, made use of **another tree, (i.e. The Cross)**, upon which He was hanged (Acts 5:30), and thereby undoing Satan's work, by saving mankind from sin and death.

The Christmas tree a **symbol of Christ**. With its twinkling lights, it reminds us that with the birth of Jesus **the tree of life has blossomed anew in the desert of humanity**.

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Micah 5:2–5a

Hebrews 10:5–10

Luke 1:39–45 (46–56)

#### *The Lord Comes to Visit Us in Peace*

The Fourth Sunday in Advent turns our attention toward the Nativity of Our Lord. With Mary we await the coming of the Christ, her Son, conceived in her womb by the Spirit of God. As the Lord dealt graciously with her and did great things for her (Luke 1:48–49), so also He manifests Himself and His glory to us in mercy and gentleness. He comes to rule His people in peace, to “*shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord*.” He comes forth not from the great capital city of Rome or Jerusalem, but from lowly little Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2, 4). He comes to sacrifice Himself, in fulfillment of His Father’s will, for the salvation and sanctification of His people (Heb. 10:10). He who once visited Elizabeth while hidden in the womb of Mary (Luke 1:39–45), now comes to visit us today, hidden in the lowliness of simple water, bread and wine.

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

December 30 First Sunday of Christmas (Series C):

Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15, Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 2:22-40