

Sunday 20th December 2020
4th Sunday in Advent

Revd Alan F. Miller

Organ Prelude

Call to Worship

Jesus said, 'Anyone who does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother or sister or mother.'

I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to his word.

The fourth candle is lit and this response is used

Jesus is the light of the world.
A light no darkness can ever put out.

Hymn 282 Christmas is coming!

Prayer

God of grace,
your eternal Word took flesh among us
when Mary placed her life
at the service of your will.
Prepare our hearts for his coming again
keep us steadfast in hope
and faithful in service
that we may receive the coming of his kingdom,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, the ruler of all,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-26

I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to my servant David:
'I will establish your descendants forever,
and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah
Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one,
and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty,
I have exalted one chosen from the people.

I have found my servant David;
with my holy oil I have anointed him;
my hand shall always remain with him;
my arm also shall strengthen him.
The enemy shall not outwit him,
the wicked shall not humble him.
I will crush his foes before him
and strike down those who hate him.
My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;
and in my name his horn shall be exalted.
I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.
He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God,
and the Rock of my salvation!'

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God,
we know that the things you have done for us are great.
The powerful cannot rule us,
and the hungry are filled with good things.
We know the greatness of your strength,
and we know the unexpectedness of your mercy.
Living God, Incarnate Love,
we confess that we are not perfect.
Before You who are everything,
we acknowledge that we are lacking.
Child of the manger, we admit that we prefer
to be sentimental rather than sacrificial.
Hear us now as we confess our faults and admit our frailties.

God is coming to us! We are not alone.
In Christ, we are accepted.
We are set free of the past.
We are given to the future.

Luke 1: 47-55

My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour 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.”

Hymn 286 Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Sermon

Music for Reflection

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

We give you all thanks and praise, O God,
for your mercy embraces the faithful,
from one generation to the next.

You created the heavens and earth,
and chose for yourself a people
establishing a covenant with them
and bringing them from slavery to a land of their own.
In your servant, David, you established your rule
and promised his throne to the one
who would save your people and reign forever.

And now, the mystery kept secret for long ages
has been revealed to all the earth:
your own Son, Jesus Christ,
is conceived by the Holy Spirit
and emerges to claim the throne of his ancestor David.
Though he was put to death by the proud and powerful,
you have raised him up,
and with him, the humble of all the earth,
and of his reign there will be no end.

We bless you, our God,
for the gifts you give us
of creation and the vision of your kingdom
shedding light in our darkness.

Bless us and disturb us, O God,
with that vision of your kingdom
and as we give voice to our hopes
may they strengthn us, reassure us,

moving us to greater love and greater commitment
to the work of the gospel:
lifting up the broken-hearted and the oppressed;
bringing good news to those imprisoned by guilt and fear;
filling the hungry with good things;
challenging the great and the powerful to act with mercy and justice.

We pray for those caught up in wars
around the world, for soldiers and civilians
for refugees and those whose lives have been shattered.

We pray for those who have nowhere to call home
who long for shelter and warmth
for those excluded from our society by poverty
and lack of opportunity
for those who struggle against the odds
to make a better life for themselves and for those they love.

We pray for those who are ill
coping with pain, fearing the worst,
and for those who care for them:
doctors, nurses, and other health workers
doing their best to make others well
in the face of overwhelming need.

We pray for those who this coming Christmas
will find not joy, but sadness:
those who have lost loved ones
those who struggle with relationships
those who will be alone.

We pray, because we know that you, our God
came to us long ago in Bethlehem
in Jesus, born of Mary;
he is the light of the world
the prince of peace
and the sign of your great love, God with us, Immanuel
and in his name, we offer all our prayers. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 290 The race that long in darkness pined

Benediction

Organ Postlude

