

# The Order of Service for Home Worship

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT



Hymn: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came.

1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.  
“All hail,” said he, “thou lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favoured lady,” Gloria!
2. “For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be.  
All generations laud and honour thee.  
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favoured lady,” Gloria!
3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.  
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.  
“My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name.”  
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!
4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn;  
And Christian folk throughout the land will ever say:  
“Most highly favoured lady,” Gloria!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**  
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Heavenly Father, all hearts are open to you. No secrets are hidden from you. Purify us with the fire of your Holy Spirit that we may love and worship you faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace is our hearts.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into your kingdom of peace.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you will come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

**Collect:** God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our Saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**A reading from the book of Micah**

**5. 2-5a**

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 labour 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Canticle: Magnificat (Luke 1. 47-55)**

**Response: The mighty one has done great thing for me and holy is his name.**

‘My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and 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; **(R)**

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. (R)

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; (R)

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 for ever.' (R)

#### **A reading from the book of Hebrews**

**10. 5-10**

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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **The Gospel Acclamation:**

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

#### **Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to Saint Luke**

**1. 39-45, 46-55**

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

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 leapt 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 leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and 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 for ever.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Meditation:** Today we near the end of our Advent journey. Christmas is near as we approach Bethlehem to worship the Christ child lying in the manger, to reflect once again on the miracle of the incarnation, God coming among his people and living with us, our constant companion on our journey through life. For this last stage of our Advent journey we join Mary who is to bear the Son of God into the world. Mary received a visit from the Archangel Gabriel who tells her that she is to bear a very special son. Mary immediately accepts the call and places herself in God's care and service. She begins her own journey which will take her to Bethlehem and ultimately to the foot of the Cross. Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth who is herself expecting a child, John the Baptist. As Mary approaches Elizabeth greets her with the words "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Her own child John leaps in Elizabeth's womb recognising that even in the womb he is in the presence of the Messiah, the Son of God. There is great excitement, in just a short while the Messiah, long promised by God, and foretold by the prophets throughout the Old Testament will come and live among his people. He will bring the good news of the love of God to all his people. He will bring the lost back into the fold of God's family. He will bring peace and hope to those who are in despair, the deep sense of peace and hope which only God can give in the midst of a dark, fearful world. On the birth of this boy, the son of Mary, the whole world places its faith and trust for a better future. We have received the good news of the love of God for us, we have responded by promising at our baptisms to walk with Jesus as he walks with us. Today we walk with Mary as she visits Elizabeth and this week we will walk with her and Joseph as they journey to Bethlehem. The calling of Mary to bear the Son of God into the world

is a calling that we all share. Her journey is one we are called to walk with her in our own daily lives. For as Mary bore her son to the world in her womb and in his birth at Bethlehem so we are called to bear her son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the world every day in our hearts. We have promised our lives to God just as Mary did. With her we say to God, "let it be done to me according to your word," This Christmas and every day let us open our hearts to God, let him make his home within us that with open, loving and generous hearts we may bear his Son bringing the light of his love all in need in the darkest places of the earth. Amen.

#### **Intercessions:**

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own ministry area: that with Mary the Church may faithfully proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; may the light of Christ enlighten the nations that your will may be followed by all people.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; help us to meet each other's needs with love and generosity.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our parish intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**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.**

#### **The Peace:**

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to shine on those who live in darkness, under the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray:

**God, our deliverer, awaken our hearts to prepare the way for the advent of your Son; that, with minds purified by the grace of his coming, we may serve you faithfully all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### **The Blessing:**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Christ the sun of righteousness shine on you and scatter the darkness from before you and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

**Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel**

- 1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 2. O come, thou rod of Jesse free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell thy people save,  
And give them victory o'er the grave.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 3. O come, thou day spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 4. O come, thou key of David, come,  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**
- 5. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,  
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient time didst give the Law,  
In cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**