

ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH

READINGS FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

THE COLLECT: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FIRST LESSON - MICAH 5:2-5A

Micah has told of the humiliation and difficulties Israel must experience in the near future, but he has written that later God will give them victory over their enemies. A shepherd-king will be born of David's line, and put an end to their oppression.

A Reading from the Word of God, found in the book of the prophet Micah, Chapter 5, beginning at the second verse.

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

The people: Thanks be to God.

CANTICLE 15

The Song of Mary: The Magnificat

Mary offers a song of praise to God who has looked with favor on her and who has lifted up the lowly and brought down the powerful.

Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly
servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:*
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,*
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel,*
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son:*
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:*

and shall be forever. **Amen.**

THE SECOND LESSON: HEBREWS 10:5-10

Under Jewish law, each year the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement to offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of certain sins, but Christ's sacrifice, his total self-offering, once and for all on the Cross, renders continuation of these sacrifices unnecessary.

A reading from the Word of God, written in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chapter 10, beginning at the fifth verse.

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

The people: *Thanks be to God.*

THE GOSPEL - LUKE 1:39-45

As an angel foretold, Elizabeth is now six months pregnant with John the Baptist, and her relative Mary carries Jesus, foretold to be the Son of God, in her womb. God will make Jesus a king of David's line; he will rule Israel for ever.

Gospeler: *The Lord be with you*

All: *And also with you*

Gospeler: *A Reading from the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.*

All: *Glory to Christ Our Saviour.*

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."

This is the Gospel of Christ

The people: Praise to Christ our Lord.

(NRSV)

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