

RADISSON-LANGHAM LUTHERAN PARISH

First Saskatchewan Lutheran Church
Langham, SK

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Radisson, SK

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2020

St. Paul, Radisson/First Saskatchewan, Langham
Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Ministers: Members of the Congregation
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Lighting of the Advent Candles:

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,

We confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free-free from all that holds you back and free

to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day:

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Reflection: To a girl named Mary an angel came

This fourth Sunday in Advent, we have the advantage of knowing what is next. The girl named Mary, however, did not know why an angel would disrupt the normal course of her life with the simple words, "Greetings favored one, the Lord is with you."

Renita J. Weems is a distinguished biblical scholar, an author, and a public intellectual who has also served as an ordained elder in the African American Episcopal Church since 1984. She offers some refreshing insights for deeper reflection on this Sunday's Gospel, Luke 1:26-38, saying: "Mary does not know her life is about to be both upended and established forever in the history of humankind... It is no wonder that she was perplexed... Mary's life circumstances would reasonably cause her to question: Am I favored? Is God with me? What will His favor entail?"

Weems points out that - of all the Gospel writers, only Luke records the account of Gabriel, Zechariah, and Elizabeth (foretelling the conception of John) as well as the account of Gabriel and Mary (foretelling the conception of Jesus). Luke gives privilege to Mary; where the unnamed angel in Matthew tells Joseph not to "put Mary away" secretly, Luke's angelic messenger Gabriel calls Mary favored, and affirms that she is in the company of the God of Israel. "Mary

the mother of Jesus is often considered Luke's model of obedient, contemplative discipleship... she is celebrated for her submission, without regard for the social and physical strain that would come for a poor pregnant girl in ancient Palestine."

Consider the harsh reality of being a young girl, pregnant and unmarried, in a little farm town called Nazareth. Weems emphasizes that indeed, it was to a girl named Mary that the angel came: "Imagine Mary's pregnant body, continuing with the rhythms of a fishing community - cleaning, slicing, preparing. Imagine the strain on her back as she carried water from the well. Imagine the swelling of her feet as she planted and gathered the harvest during the late stages of pregnancy. Imagine the sweat dripping from her brow as she gathered grain and kneaded it for the evening meal. Social distancing and ridicule for an unwed pregnancy aside, life for Mary would not have been easy."

"This advent season," Ms. Weems tells us, "may we sit with the assurance that God is with us. As we reflect on a tumultuous year, may we receive the words of Gabriel to Mary as our own: God is with us. The Divine visits an unsuspecting young girl named Mary, and the Divine visits us...Even as a young girl by the name of Mary was impacted by the social realities of her day, we, too, are immersed in and squeezed by the societal challenges of the 21st-century. And God is with us. Gabriel's words remind us, assure us, comfort us: yes, God is with us! pgk

Prayers of Intercession:

God of power and might, fulfill your promise and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A Brief Silence

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and

soils, that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence (especially...). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Draw near to us, O God and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Saviour fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Let us remember in our prayers: Andrew Nosterud, Harry Meister, Edwin Loessin, Lisa Hamp, Sonia Zacharias, Darren Wilkie, Carla Wilkie, Susan Wonko, Heather Penno, Inga Abrahamson, Genie Thompson, Linda Hartshorn, Logan Kane, Alma

Krueger, Anthony Flath, Elsie Flath, Conrad Olson, Ethel Kuny, Mark Anderson, Roger Wilkie, also everyone affected by Covid 19, especially the Regional Psyc Centre and the Luther Special Care Home.

Also, Leonard & Connie Verishine and Harvey & Diane Verishine on the passing of their mother/mother-in-law, Anne Verishine on December 11. The private funeral was held this past week.

For at-home worship services/devotions you could check out the following:

- Seven Lutheran churches in Saskatoon have set up a website where you can easily view live-streamed or taped services each week: <https://saskatoonelcic.com/>. A full list of churches with streamed services across Canada can be found here: <https://elcic.ca/publichealth/livestreaming.cfm>

- You can catch Rev. Rick Chappell on YouTube at Trinity Lutheran Church, Westlock, AB

- You can check out Trinity Lutheran Church Estevan FaceBook as Sharon (Schreiner) Kane is interning there

- Pastor Randy Fiege is live on Facebook

Lutherans Connect is doing an Advent blog again this year at <https://lclongingforrenewal.blogspot.com/2020/11/>

You can find advent devotions from "On Eagle's Wings", an ecumenical missionary outreach to Canada's north, at this link: <https://www.oneaglewingsnorth.com>

If you'd like to get a prayer by email each day during Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas, contact Pastor Bruce Ehlert at: pbprayer@telus.net

Christmas Goodwill at Radisson and area: Due to Covid 19, there will not be Christmas hampers delivered; instead there will be gift cards for food. If you wish to make a financial donation (before Tuesday, December 22), you can leave it at Wenner Foods or at the Radisson Town Office if you wish an Income Tax receipt for any donation over \$20.00. If you have any questions or have someone whom you know may benefit, please contact

Gertrude at 306-827-7408 or Leona at 1-306-202-6844.

****** A Virtual Christmas Eve Service, with music! at 7:00p:** In keeping with our Parish's tradition to have a Christmas Eve Service, we have reached out to Pastor Marilyn Fowlie-Neufeld at Augustana Lutheran Church, where they are preparing a virtual Christmas Eve Service complete with Christmas music, prayers and a sermon. Pastor Marilyn will be acknowledging and greeting First Saskatchewan and St. Paul congregations during the service, which will be available [HERE](#) at 7:00p on Thursday, December 24. If that time or date doesn't work for you, it will still be available from the Augustana YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCua4E9ZVx1Z4WfmcToZLnBA>)

There will be no service on Sunday December 27. The next bulletin will be prepared for January 3 (and will be available by New Year's Day). We will continue to post the Lutherans Connect devotionals on our FaceBook page every day right through Christmas to Epiphany, "offering daily reflections, music, images and art as a way of helping us all hope for a time of new creation."

First Sask Secret Sisters - please contact either Janice Brown 306-283-4925, or Roxanne Elke 306-384-9930 with some feedback regarding Secret Sisters for 2021.

First Sask - envelope giving is down a bit this year and December is usually a big month for the church - obviously that will not be happening this year. So, please, if you can, make a catch-up offering this month or an additional offering. First Sask is now accepting donations in the form of e-transfers. The email address to transfer the funds to is firstsasklutheranchurch@gmail.com. If you have a special designation for the money - missions, LTS, CLWR, etc., include it in the message space on the e-transfer. This is also where you can include information given in memory of someone. If you have any questions call Roxanne at 306-384-9930. You can also still mail your cheque to Roxanne Elke, P.O. Box 272, Grandora, SK S0K 1V0

First Sask - A Parish Treasurer is still being sought from First Sask congregation. Please consider taking on this position. Contact Eric or Roxanne.

First Sask & St. Paul - anyone wishing a donation receipt for 2020 income tax purposes, please have your contribution in by December 27. Receipts will be issued for \$20.00 and over.

First Sask - your 2021 Offering Envelop box and your quarterly statements are in your church mailbox. Check your envelop box for your statement as it may be inside.

Annual report time is quickly approaching. Please have your written reports to Doris by **January 3**. Financial reports should be in asap after having them reviewed.

St. Paul - your 2021 box of offering envelopes is in your church mailbox.

Donations to St. Paul - You could send your cheque to Darlene Kindt, Box 97, Radisson or drop it off at the church.

Monday, December 21 - Keep your eyes on the sky as Jupiter and Saturn will be creating a radiant point of Light often referred to as the Star of Bethlehem or "a Christmas Star". After sunset, the planets can be seen low in the western sky for an hour after sunset when viewed from the northern hemisphere. The event can be seen sinking towards the horizon but will be bright enough to be viewed in the twilight. If you have clear skies and look southwest, you will be able to view the celestial event within 45 minutes after sunset. The next time this happens will be 2080!

Happy Birthday this week: Monica Keet, Judy Wilkie, Chase Fouhy, Garry Leschyshyn, Jennifer Krsacok, Jill Turner, Diane Verishine, Taryn Hanley, Janelle Westad

Happy Birthday December 27 - January 2: Luke Anderson, Tanya Hamre, Brian Thiessen, Wynter Johnson, Phyllis Rothenburger, Mark Wonko, John Zacharias, Hailey Hamp, Chad Ross, Abigail Roth,

Jason Farthing, Parish Salmond, Ineke Gallop-Schensney, Owen Westad

This Christmas season, we find ourselves reflecting on a year that changed our lives in unexpected ways. We look forward to a new year filled with possibility. Wishing you peace and joy as we celebrate Christmas 2020 in a quieter way. Stay safe. **Merry Christmas!**

FIRST READING: 2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16

7 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³ Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷ Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 16:25-27

²⁵ Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

GOSPEL: LUKE 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

CHRISTMAS EVE READINGS:

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

GOSPEL: LUKE 2:1-14

² In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

SECOND READING: TITUS 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great