

## (Historic) Scripture Lessons for ☪ ☪ ☪ the Fourth Sunday in Advent

**OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 40:1-8 NIV**  
Comfort, comfort My people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's Hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." 6 A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. 7 The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever."

**EPISTLE Philippians 4:4-7** Rejoice in the LORD always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The LORD is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### Historic Gospel

**John 1:6-8; 19-28** There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that Light, so that through Him all men 7

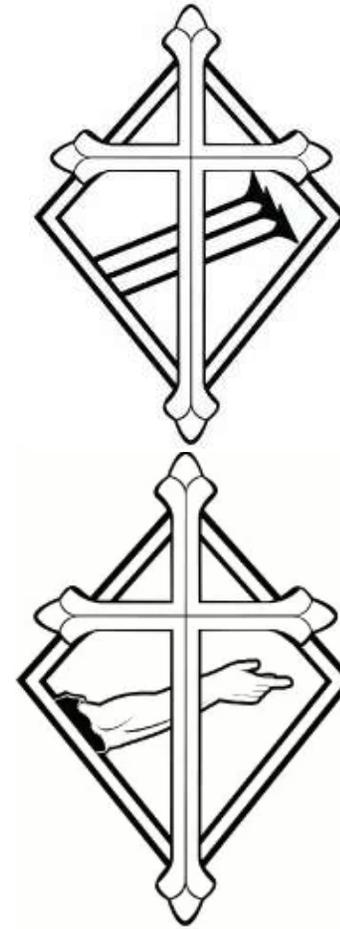
might believe. 8 He himself was not the Light; he came only as a witness to the Light. ... 19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was.

### 3-Year-C Gospel (Sermon Text)

**Luke 1:39-55** At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!" 46 And Mary said:

*"My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me - Holy is His Name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as He said to our fathers."*

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL  ELS  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent/C ☪☪☪☪ *Mother(s of John &) Jesus*



# OSL OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OSL

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BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

✧ Rev. Andrew R. Burmeister 863-430-5859 ✧ Organ: A.R. Burmeister

## December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 Advent-4 🕯️🕯️🕯️ *Salvation is Near!*

**WELCOME to Our Savior!** We are so happy to have you worship with us today. If you are visiting us for the first time (or in a long time), we ask that that you please fill out a visitor card found in the pew cardholder and place it in the offering plate. Come and worship with us again! **The LORD bless you.**

**OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP** On gold liturgy sheets or in red TLH Hymnal p.5

Suggested Hymn	TLH# (vv)	...First Line
Opening Hymn	96 (4v)	Oh, Rejoice, Ye Christians Loudly
<i>Psalm 25</i>	<i>Ps.25 '3v'</i>	<i>To You, O LORD, I Lift My Soul ... ↗</i>
Hymn of the Day	62 (4v)	Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Immanuel
<i>Offertory Verses</i>	<i>95 (7v)</i>	<i>Sing v1-2 Savior of the Nations, Come</i>
Third Hymn	95 (7v)	<i>Sing v3-7 (Wondrous Birth! O Wondrous)</i>
Closing Hymn	47 (4v)	Savior Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise

### Suggested Bible readings for the weekdays of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday  
 Isa. 40:1-11 Malachi 3:1-7 Malachi 4:1-6 Isa.28:14-19 Isa.7:1-17 Micah5:1-5  
 Matt.1:18-25 Luke1:39-45 Luke 1:46-56 Luke1:57-66 Lu.1:67-80 Matt1:1-17

### PROPERs for RORATÉ COELI = 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY of ADVENT 🕯️🕯️🕯️ DEC 23<sup>RD</sup>

**INTROIT** Drop down, you Heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open and bring forth Salvation. The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. ...Psalm 90

**COLLECT** Stir up Your power, O LORD, and come, and help us with Your great might, that whatever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished by Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our LORD, Who lives - and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one True God, now and forever.  
 C: ♪ A--men.

**GRADUAL C:** Alleluia! The LORD is near to all those who call on Him, to all that call on Him in truth. My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His holy Name. Alleluia! Alleluia! You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, my LORD. Alleluia! ...from Psalm 144

### SCRIPTURE LESSONS (printed on the outside back page of the bulletin →)

O.T. **Isaiah 40:1-8** God will send His messenger of *comfort*, John B.  
 Epi. **Philippians 4:4-7** Rejoice in the LORD *always*. I say again, **REJOICE!**  
 Gos. **John 1:19-28** John the Baptist testifies that He is *not* the Christ.

**SERMON** (Gospel-C) Luke 1:39-55 **THEME: "2 VERY UNLIKELY PREGNANCIES"**

### Psalm 25 REFRAIN: To You, O LORD, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

**Verse 1.** ♪ Lord, \_ Make me know Your ways, Teach me Your paths, And keep me in the way of Your truth, \_ For You are God, my Saviour.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

**Verse 2.** ♪ For-the-Lord is good and righteous, \_ Revealing His way, To those who seek Him, \_ Gently leading the poor, and the humble.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

**Verse 3.** ♪ To-the-ones who seek the Lord, \_ Who look to His Word, Who live in His Love, \_ He-will-always be near; He will show them His mercy.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

TLH #95 1. **Savior of the nations come Virgin's Son, make here Thy home! Marvel now, O Heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a Birth.**

2. **Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God, Was the Word of God made Flesh- Woman's Offspring, pure and fresh.**

### PRAYER REQUESTS: (Member or Relation) Pray for...

Dee Kurczewski (David) Dee - rehabbing. David back working  
 DuWayne Marquardt (Shirley) Safe travels this Season and good health (DW)  
 Carolyn Miner (Don) Happy they're here (FL). Carolyn recovering from stroke  
 Jon & Andrea Sawyer Jon's heart, changing work. Andrea started new work  
 James Vanesky & Delores Platt Both rehabbing. We enjoy seeing them

Volunteers	Today	Next Sunday
Greeters	Bev Foster & Joe Thacker	Elaine Jones
Treaters	Vivian & Tom Temple	

Statistics	Last week	Year To Date / Avg.
Sunday, Attendance (Communion)	26 / (21)	24 / 19
Bible Class Attendance: Sunday	10	11
Sunday Offering (Needed) & YTD	\$. (\$1,350)	YTD \$., (\$68.7K)

Calendar of Events		
Today December 23	8:30 am	Bible Study Christ Figures: <i>Tree/Vine</i>
Fourth Sunday of Advent SalvationNear	9:30 am	Divine Worship (NO Communion)
	10:45 ff...	"FFF" = Food, Fun & Fellowship ... Stay!
Monday, 12/24 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Special Family Christmas EVE at church
Tuesday, 12/25 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 pm	Special Christmas DAY Worship-church
Next Sunday 12/30	8:30 am	Bible Study Christ Figures: <i>Bonus Figures</i>
First Sunday after Christmas	9:30 am	Divine Worship (NO Communion)
	10:45 ff...	"FFF" = Food, Fun & Fellowship ... Stay!
Monday, 12/1 <sup>st</sup>	7:00 pm	Special New Year's Eve Worship W/ L.S.

Elders: Tom Temple 213-4622; John Weber 853-5458; Don Wienke 815-8892

✧ Note the Special Worship opportunities on **Monday Christmas EVE & Tues...DAY.**

Monday 12/24 Christmas-EVE 7:00 PM (Special Family "Tree" Christmas)  
 Tuesday 12/25 Christmas-DAY 9:30 AM (Traditional Lessons & Carols)  
 Next Sun. 12/30 Christmas-1 (No L.S. p.5) TLH #s ELH-139 Ps.98 647 79 106 97

**ADVENT-4/C Luke 1:39-45 "2 (VERY) UNLIKELY PREGNANCIES" 12.23.18 OSL**

**UNLIKELY MOMS** Today, on this **Fourth** (and Last) **Sunday of Advent**, the Gospel takes a **kinder and gentler tone** than we've had over the last two weeks with John the Baptizer. Today we have two very unlikely women meeting in a town of Judah. Two expectant mothers get together, which isn't all that unusual in and of itself, especially considering they are related. But consider this for a moment: one is in the third trimester of her pregnancy even as she's in the **senior years** of her life. And the other has just begun her pregnancy as a **virgin. Nothing is impossible with God.**

**REASON(ABLE) FOR VISIT** Luke doesn't tell us **WHY Mary went to see Elizabeth**, but one can only wonder what it would be like to hear from an angel that you are about to conceive the Son of God by the Holy Spirit while you're in the process of getting married to a man who's still scratching his head over the whole business. The local gossip mill was grinding, as it always does. Sometimes it's best to leave town for a while and take up with relatives who at least would understand.

**OLD AND YOUNG** If anyone would understand it was Elizabeth, a senior citizen well past her childbearing age who was three months away from delivering her son John, the forerunner of Jesus. They form quite an amazing picture, these two women – **a pregnant (teen?) Virgin and an expectant mother old enough to be a (great) grandmother.** *Truly, nothing is impossible with God!* And just as truly, God doesn't take the easy or the expected, way. His ways are definitely not our ways; his thoughts certainly not our thoughts. And sometimes God's way is simply bizarre.

**JUMP-4-JOY** As soon as Mary speaks her greeting, John leaps for joy in his mother's womb. John is already preaching Christ, and he isn't even born yet! So much for the common notion that life in the womb is somehow less than human or less than aware. Or that the Word of God can't get there. Or that infants can't believe. **John was** (already) **preaching "in utero"!** (Maybe that's an/other reason he is considered by some the "Greatest Preacher" of all-time – he started *very* early!) And his mother Elizabeth was the "**Spirit-appointed interpreter.**"

**BLESSED R U !** Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth blesses her younger relative. *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb!"* Those of you who are familiar with **Roman Catholic** piety will immediately recognize the first part of the "*Hail Mary.*" That's the part we can agree with. **Mary is surely blessed**, as she herself said, *"from this day all generations will bless me."* (*Magnificat*) And the Child in her womb is blessed. **He's the Son of God.** It's the second part of the "*Hail Mary* we can't agree with, namely, "pray for us now and in the hour of our death." The one you want praying for you and interceding for you **is Jesus, NOT His mother**, no matter how honored and blessed she might be.

**MOTHER OF LIFE** Notice that Elizabeth doesn't worship Mary or seek her blessing. Elizabeth blesses her and calls her "*Blessed among women.*" Mary is what every Israelite woman aspired to be, the mother of the Messiah. She is the counterpart to Eve. Eve heard the doubting word of the devil and was deceived. Mary heard the Word of God through the angel, and she conceived. Her Child is the devil's head crusher, the One Who would make enmity with evil and conquer death by dying. You might say that Mary is the **ultimate fulfillment of motherhood** in bearing the promised Savior of humanity. As Eve was the mother of all the living (her name means "life") so Mary is the mother **of the One Who IS Life**, the Source and Savior of all life. She is the epitome of motherhood and brings a unique dignity to women. One of yours is the mother of God's Son Jesus.

**"MY" LORD** Elizabeth calls her "*the mother of my Lord.*" "Why is this granted to me that the mother of **my** Lord should come to me?" That sentence ought to give us pause for a moment. It took Christianity nearly 400 years finally to sort out what Elizabeth simply blurts out with Spirit-filled joy. This younger cousin of hers, a young woman probably 17 or at most 18 years old, is the "*Mother of her Lord.*" And if that doesn't give you a few pre-Christmas goosebumps this morning, then you didn't have enough coffee ... or you aren't listening.

**THEOTOKOS** This is the very essence of the **Christmas mystery – a great and mighty wonder.** The Lord of the universe, the Word through Whom all things were made, **has a mother!** The Word became Flesh and dwells among us. The infinite Almighty Son of God takes up residence in the finite confines of a mother's womb. The Fullness of Deity dwells among us Bodily. The Creator literally becomes the creature. When speaking of Jesus, God is man and man is God. And Mary is, as the Council of Chalcedon correctly called her, **Theotokos, the one who bore God in her womb.**

**BECAME HUMAN, A BABY!** Jesus could have appeared suddenly out of nowhere, I suppose, as a **fully grown Man.** God can dwell among us in any way He chooses. But then there would be doubts cast over His work. Does He fully embrace our humanity? Is He fully human, or does He just appear to be that way? (**The Greeks** believed that the gods took on the form of humans, but no one believed that a god **would become human.** That's beneath the dignity of deity!)

**HAD TO BE HUMAN** Had Jesus not had a human mother, we would forever doubt His Humanity. Was He really just like us or did He **only appear that way?** And in doubting His Humanity, we would then question whether He is really **our substitute under the Law**, and whether **His death actually atones for our sins**, whether He truly is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We would doubt that His death embraced the newly born and even the unborn. We would even doubt whether His death on the Cross was a genuine one, or just some "Divine special effects."

?OMIT? Had Jesus shown up as, say, a 30 year old Man, he would have sidestepped some of the most difficult and painful parts of our human existence – the trauma of childbirth, the helplessness of infancy, the bumps and bruises of toddler-hood, the challenges of childhood, the awkwardness of adolescence. He wouldn't have known what it's like to wear diapers, to be utterly dependent on father and mother and to live obediently under them.

GOD=MAN It **had to be this way** for Jesus to literally be the Savior of all. His human nature embraces all our humanity, from the tiniest cluster of cells in a mother's womb to the dying breath of the Man on a Cross. Literally from the **"Womb to the Tomb,"** Jesus embraces the fullness of our humanity with the fullness of His Divinity. **God is Man and Man is God.** File that away for the coming week as this year's Christmas comes because that is the true Reason for the SeaSON.

FAITH & TRUST Elizabeth blesses Mary **for her faith.** Mary took the angel at his Word, which was a Word from God Himself. She heard the Word and believed that God would do what He said, **no matter how unlikely, how unreasonable it seemed.** People weren't ignorant then. They may not have known about molecular biology, but they knew the basic biology of the birds and the bees. They knew **virgins do not ordinarily, or ever, conceive.** Even Joseph, Mary's earthly husband, did not initially believe Mary.

MARY IS A PICTURE Mary believed the Word of God. In this way, **Mary is also a picture of every believer.** She hears the impossible Word, that **in her virginity she would conceive and bear a Son,** Who would be Immanuel, God with us, to save His people from their sins. And she responds the way **only faith can** respond to the impossible Word of God. *"Amen,"* she says. *"Let it be to me according to your Word."* And that's how it is with us. God says to us, *"In this Son, Jesus Christ, you have life, you have forgiveness, you have peace, you have everything in fullest measure."* And faith simply says, *"Yes. Amen. Let it be to me according to your Word."*

GOD SAYS/WE BELIEVE God says to us, this **Baptism is your new life,** the washing away of your sins, your rebirth and renewal, and faith says *"Yes, Amen. Let it be to me according to Your Word."* - Christ says to us *"You are **Forgiven**"* by these very Words that you hear, and faith says, *"Yes, Amen. Let it be to me according to your Word."* - Jesus says, *"This is My **Body given and My Blood shed for you.**"* And faith simply says in the way of Mary, *"Yes, Amen."*

MOM vs. SIS Mary is not our mother, as some say. She is **our sister in faith.** An honored, chosen, unique sister who bore the singular dignity of bearing the Word of God. She is a **perpetual reminder that with God nothing is impossible.** An old couple has a son in their old age. A young woman conceives in her virginity. The dead are raised. Sinners are justified. **With God nothing is impossible.** Come, Lord Jesus! **IJ'N, Amen.**

SDG

## **Possible Prayer of Church for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent ✕ December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. (Possible brief silence)*

Almighty God, we praise You that by Your Holy Spirit, Elizabeth greeted Mary as "the mother of my Lord" while the unborn John leaped with joy in the presence of Your Son in Mary's womb. Increase in us Your Spirit, that our faith may bear fruit in abundance. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we praise You that, from their conception, You prepared prophets to proclaim Your truth. Even so, we pray that You would prepare servants of the Word today to preach Your saving Gospel with faithfulness and power. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we praise You that by Your kind providence, **You create new life.** Preserve all pregnant women and the children in their wombs. Bring to repentance all who would take the lives of the unborn, and foster the work of crisis pregnancy centers and others who aid and encourage women to keep their babies. Remember in mercy all who serve in public office in our land, granting them wisdom, courage and integrity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we praise You that You are Father to the fatherless and that You provide for the poor when all others have forgotten them. Graciously watch over the hungry, the poor and the unemployed. Move us to serve You in showing mercy to all those in need, near and far. Comfort the grieving, heal the sick and grant faith to the dying. *[We pray especially for OSL Prayer List.]*

<b>PRAYER REQUESTS:</b>	<b>(Member or Relation)</b>	<b>Pray for...</b>
<b>Dee Kurczewski</b>	(David)	Dee - rehabbing. David back working
<b>DuWayne Marquardt</b>	(Shirley)	Safe travels this Season and good health (DW)
<b>Carolyn Miner</b>	(Don)	Happy they're here (FL). Carolyn recovering from stroke
<b>Jon &amp; Andrea Sawyer</b>		Jon's heart, changing work. Andrea started new work
<b>James Vanesky &amp; Delores Platt</b>		Both rehabbing. We enjoy seeing them

We pray for healing for all. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we claim nothing as our own, for all things come from You. Accept the **worship of our lips, the service of our lives, and the tithes** and offerings we bring in Jesus' name. Grant that we may use all things for Your glory, for the blessing of those in our care and for the support of Your Church. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God and Father, fill us with Your Spirit that our love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, that discerning what is best we may be pure and blameless until the day of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Then, Lord's Prayer, "Our Father ... "**