

**Perley Lutheran Parish**  
December 19, 2021  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

*I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*  
*Isaiah 22:22*



**Gathering Hymn: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to men from heav'n's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,  
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,  
When the new heav'n and earth shall own the Prince of Peace their King,  
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

**Invocation**

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

For centuries, the church has used through Advent a series of antiphons, or responses, to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth. These seven responses, names and titles for our Savior, are often called the "O Antiphons," familiar to us in the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." We light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath in praise to Christ, who holds the Key of David, who is himself the Key who opens heaven to us. Through the prophet Isaiah, God said, "I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David."

**C "He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open" (Isaiah 22:22).**

P O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel, controlling at your will the gate of heaven; come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death;

**C And lead your captive people into freedom.**

**Lighting of the Advent Candle**

This morning, we light four candles: the candles of hope, peace, joy, and today's candle love. This candle reminds us that God so loved the world, he sent his only son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have life everlasting. Today we celebrate

God's gift of love and remember that we have been commanded to love others as God loves us.

### **O Come, O Come Emmanuel**

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

### **Confession and Absolution**

P Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

**C Almighty God, through Christ our Savior you have opened to us the door to eternal life, yet so often we lock our hearts and minds against you. We turn from your will and Word and follow our own selfish desires. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

P God in mercy sent his Son to be our Savior. By his death and resurrection, Jesus has unlocked for us the door to eternal life; he has set us free. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**C Lord Jesus, lead us to live as people who have been set free!**

### **Prayer of the Day**

**Almighty God, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Christ Jesus your Son, we rejoice in the salvation we have through faith in his name. He is the Key and the Door, and his is the only name by which we are saved. Through his death and resurrection he has unlocked the kingdom of heaven to us. In him we have forgiveness for our sins. Through this Advent season, into Christmas and the New Year, help us by your Spirit to share the good news of forgiveness with others, so they too will come to know and worship Jesus as Lord. Hear our prayer in his name. Amen.**

### **Old Testament Reading, Isaiah 22:20-23**

In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him like a

peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house.

**Epistle Reading, Revelation 3:7-13**

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

**Gospel Reading, Matthew 16:13-19 Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you O Christ**

**Message:** "Come, O Key of David,"

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

*The account from the Old Testament, events in the history of Israel's kings, does not start out like a Christmas story—but it gets there!*

After the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel split into two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Over time, the two weakened kingdoms fell subject to the Assyrian empire. First Israel in the north rebelled and was conquered, its people taken captive and sent into exile in Assyria. Then during the reign of King Hezekiah,

who was a good and God-fearing king, the kingdom of Judah rebelled against Assyria. Threatened with destruction, Judah gave in and paid a tribute of gold and silver to Assyria, but it is not enough. The Assyrian king sent his messengers to Jerusalem to threaten Judah with destruction. The messengers mocked the God of Israel. They boasted that the gods of other nations had not saved those people. They ridiculed the people of Judah and said their God would not be able to save them either. There would be no escape.

King Hezekiah of Judah sent his servants to listen to the Assyrian threats. Among these servants was Eliakim, the manager of the king's household. After hearing the Assyrian threats and their ridicule of Israel's God, Eliakim and his fellow servants tore their robes in anguish. Yet Eliakim did not sugar-coat the message. He faithfully reported the threats and mockery to the king. Hezekiah next sent them to Isaiah the prophet, who told the king that God would save Israel—and so he did. When the time came, just one angel killed 185,000 Assyrian troops and the Assyrian king returned home in disgrace, where he was killed by his own sons.

No, not much Advent or Christmas cheer to be found there, until the prophet Isaiah singles out Eliakim as a faithful messenger. Into the hands of this faithful messenger is committed the authority of the king's household. Eliakim will have the key to the house of David, the royal house. His authority is absolute. When he opens a door, no one will be able to shut it. If he locks a door, no one will be able to open it. The prophet places faithful Eliakim squarely on the road through Advent to Christmas, because Eliakim is a picture of another faithful messenger to come.

The word of God through Isaiah is fulfilled in Jesus, the Child of Bethlehem. Jesus, like Eliakim, is the faithful messenger, the "faithful witness" (Revelation 1:5). Jesus said of himself, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me" (John 8:28). Jesus carried out the work that his Father sent him to do. As Eliakim was once forced to listen to the Assyrian officials mock the God of Israel, so Jesus endured the ridicule of his opponents. Religious officials mocked his claim to be the Messiah. Soldiers beat him and crowned him with thorns, making a mockery of his kingship. Even as he hung on the cross, his enemies ridiculed the ability of Israel's God to save: "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" (Luke 23:35).

His enemies mocked his claim, but it was true. Jesus was and is the Christ, the Chosen One of God. He did not save himself because he died on the cross to save us. By his death he destroyed the power of death and the devil, and was raised up in victory on the third day. Israel's God most certainly has the power to save, and it was a

power shown in the manger, in the cross and in the empty tomb.

Even though we may have no sympathy for those Assyrian officials who mocked the God of Israel, we may have more in common with them than we like to admit. We are called to be faithful, but we may at times have our doubts about God's ability to save. Sometimes we too worship other gods, whether money or possessions, relationships or popularity. We like to make ourselves gods, too, so that we can make our own decisions when our desires do not line up with God's commands. Even at Christmas, when we remember Jesus' birth, we may let our busy lives block out the one whose birth we are going to celebrate.

Like Eliakim of Judah, Jesus, the faithful messenger of the house of David, sees and hears our complaints and our doubt and our sins. He did not respond in kind, but took our sins onto himself and carried them to the cross. There he suffered and died for the sin and mockery and selfishness that mark our lives. As the apostle Peter wrote of Jesus the faithful witness: "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:22-24).

In the book of Revelation Jesus is described as the holy one who holds the key of David, "who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens." Jesus is the faithful steward, the manager, of the kingdom of God, of the household of God. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the crucified and risen Lord. By his death and resurrection, Jesus has unlocked the kingdom of heaven for us. He is the Door to salvation and he is the Key who has unlocked forgiveness for us. He has given those keys and that authority to his people on earth, to his Church. When you hear the announcement that your sins are forgiven, it is as sure as if Jesus himself were speaking, because he is speaking, through his Church.

Very soon we will celebrate the birth of Christ our Savior, who was faithful in all things to his heavenly Father, just as Eliakim was faithful in his service to the king. At Christmas we will celebrate the good news that those tiny hands of the infant in Bethlehem's manger hold the key that unlocks the kingdom of heaven for us. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day/Offering:** O Little Town of Bethlehem  
O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

**Offering Response:** We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be. All that we have is ours alone, a trust O Lord in thee.

### **Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian/catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen**

**Prayers:** (P: King of kings and Lord of lords, **C: Hear our prayers and accept our praise.**)

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence. Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. King of kings and Lord of lords, **Hear our prayers and accept our praise**

Lord Jesus, you are the Key and the Door to paradise. We praise you for your humble birth, for your suffering and death and for your mighty resurrection. You have unlocked the kingdom of heaven to us. As you were a faithful witness for your heavenly Father, help us to be faithful messengers for you as we share the good news. Let your Holy Spirit be at work through our songs and prayers and words and works of love during the holy season so that others will come to know and worship you as Lord. Mighty Savior, Key of David, King of kings and Lord of lords, **Hear our prayers and accept our praise**

Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. King of kings and Lord of lords, **Hear our prayers and accept our praise**

Nurturing God, you come near us in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned or ill

this day. Today we especially lift up Tom and Chris, Roger and Sonya, Kirk and Daniel, Terry and Marlis, Whitney and Jaime, Anne and Brent, Lynn and those we now name silently in our hearts ..... grant them healing and wholeness. King of kings and Lord of lords, **Hear our prayers and accept our praise**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### **The Meal**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

**C: In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.**

### **Words of Institution**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: *Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: *This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for remembrance of me.*

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

**C: Pour out your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion we may know the unity we share with all your people in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

**C: all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

***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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

### **Invitation to Communion**

P: Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

### **After Communion Prayer:**

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.

**Blessing:** (sung)

The Lord bless you and keep you  
Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you  
The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace  
Amen, amen, amen. Amen, amen, amen

**Sending Bell**

**Sending Hymn:** My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness Lord

My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord. I sing my Savior's praise!  
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.  
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim—  
great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.

To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure;  
the promise to our parents made their children will secure.  
Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word,  
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all adored.

Dismissal: Go in peace, Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**

**Mark Your Calendar**

Monday, December 20 – Nora Council at 6:30

Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – 7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Nora

Sunday, December 26<sup>th</sup> – No Services



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