

Lectionary

You are invited to follow the first two readings while seated, and as is the custom, to just listen, standing if possible, as the Holy Gospel is proclaimed.

Sunday 21st December Advent 4

The 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.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

This is the word of the Lord,

All: Thanks be to God.

New Testament: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord,

All: Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Matthew.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

