

ST JOHN FISHER CHURCH



ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND IN OREGON
OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

4th Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020

First Reading **2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16**

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you."

But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'" "It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

Responsorial:

Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Second Reading **Romans 16:25-27**

Brothers and sisters:

To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ,

according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel **Luke 1:26-38**

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "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 called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God

from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, **all bow**

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.



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Words from the Pastor

December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

As we light the last candle on our Advent wreath, we reflect on Jesus being in the line of King David because Joseph was of the house of David. “I will raise up your heir after you sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall have no end.” The Gospel from St. Luke contains the angel Gabriel, inviting Mary to be the mother of the Son of the Most High. He, too, speaks of this Son of God inheriting the throne of King David for all time. The angel goes on to announce that Mary’s elderly relative, Elizabeth, is six months pregnant. She had been thought to be barren, “for nothing will be impossible for God.” Mary humbly accepts the mission, saying “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

This account of the birth of Jesus is familiar to us—we hear it acclaimed every year around this time. But do we really understand how it sounded to Mary when she first heard it. Mary had dedicated herself to be a virgin, and now the Lord was asking her to be a virgin and a mother. How could this be? The missing piece was the Holy Spirit who would come and ‘overshadow’ her. I sometimes wonder how her conversation with Joseph went. Joe, I think you had better sit down. I’m pregnant, but I have had no relations with a man. What would Joseph think? He had thought Mary was a virtuous young woman. Jewish law allowed a pregnant, unmarried woman to be stoned to death. Eventually he accepted it, perhaps never fully aware of what had happened.