
Advent Week 4



Image: The Annunciation, Henry Ossawa Tanner (Public Domain)

During the fourth week of Advent, we focus on Mary's open heart as she prepares to receive the gift of Emmanuel ~ God-with-us.

We Gather

(Lighting of the fourth purple candle of the Advent Wreath – the love candle)

Leader: We light the fourth candle as a sign of our faith in God's redeeming love. God's promised Messiah is coming. He brings good news for the poor and oppressed. He will bind up broken hearts. He will proclaim release to those who are held captive.

All: Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless us in our prayer. Help us to hear and do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord.
Amen

We Listen

(Luke 1:26-38)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." 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.

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

We Respond

In the company of Abraham and Isaac ~ ***Deep peace of the running wave to us.***

In the company of Sarah and Hagar ~ ***Deep peace of the flowing air to us.***

In the company of David and Hannah ~ ***Deep peace of the quiet earth to us.***

In the company of Joseph and Zachariah ~ ***Deep peace of the shining stars to us.***

In the company of Mary and Elizabeth ~ ***Deep peace of the Son of peace to us.***

(Iona Community, adapted)

We Go Forth

All: God of love, help us to contemplate the heart of Mary as it opens to receive the gift of Emmanuel. May we listen to the peace within her heart and be ready to open our own hands and hearts when we hear you call our name.