



# A Liturgy of the Word - Fourth Sunday in Advent

19 December 2021



Ven. Moses Thabethe



Rev. Matthew Wright



Rev. Sharmain James



Rev. Margaret Place



Rev. Alison Thabethe

The full service or the sermon can be viewed on the website.

## Processional Hymn

**1** And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

**3** He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race;  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
For, O my God, it found out me.

*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

**5** No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

**2** 'Tis mystery all! Th'Immortal dies!  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine!  
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more. [Refrain]

*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

**4** Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

*Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

**Author: Charles Wesley (1738)**

## Call to Worship

In this season of Advent, we celebrate God's love.

**Soon we will welcome the beautiful and radical love of God  
as Jesus Christ comes to live among us.**

We embrace our identity as God's beloved children  
and let this truth guide our decisions and relationships.

**In our homes and in our Church we offer hospitality,  
welcoming those we don't know, those who are in need,  
and those who are different from us.**





As we worship, let us demonstrate our care for creation in real and tangible ways through the products we buy, the food we eat, and the way we live every day.

**Together, we are a sign of God's love for the world.**

*Lighting of the Advent Candle*

**Fourth Sunday of Advent: The Candle of Love**

As we gather around the Advent wreath, we rejoice that Christmas is a time of prayer and of open hearts when we sing songs of joy. Christmas is a time of worship—the moment when the busiest of us pause in wonder. Christmas happens when God comes to us in love through Jesus Christ and fills us with love for all humankind.

*The First Letter of John 4:9-11 says:*

*God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent God's only Child into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent the Child to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.*

*Lighting of the Candle*

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light is love. Such great love helps us to love God and one another.

The colour of this candle is purple—symbolizing the majesty of Christ, who rules in the power of love.

*Let us pray:*

O God, we thank you that Jesus showed your love for every person— babies and children, old people and young, sick people and those who were strong, rich people and those who were poor. Come to us as Christmas approaches and let love be born in our hearts as you were born into the world on Christmas Day. **Amen**

*Introductory Rite*

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Praise the Lord:

**Praise God, you servants of the Lord.**

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**Blessed be God's Name, now and forever.**

*Collect for Purity*

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hid:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen**

*The Kyrie*

Hosi, Hosi hi tsetselele  
Kriste, Kriste hi tsetselele  
Hosi, Hosi hi tsetselele

*Sung by Ven Moses Thabethe*





*The Penitence*

Let us call to mind the times we have failed to love as we should and resolve again to fulfil, by God's grace, his commandment to love:

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word, and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy, forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be.  
That we may do justly, love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

*Absolution*

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy on you: pardon your sins and set you free from them; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Collect*

**God of Elizabeth and Mary:  
make our hearts leap with joy,  
fill our mouths with songs of praise  
and make us ready to welcome the Christ in our midst;  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God in glory everlasting. Amen.**

*The Word of God*

Micah 5:2-5a

Psalm 80: 1-7

Hebrews 10:5-10

*Gospel Acclamation*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

I am the Good Shepherd, says the Lord  
I know my sheep and mine know me

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

*Gospel Reading*



*sung by Ven Moses Thabethe*



*Sermon*

by Revd Matthew Wright

*Affirmation of Faith*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Prayers of Intercession*

Heavenly Father, as the universal Church prepares again to celebrate the Feast of the Christ-mass, we ask that you would reveal anew the significance of the incarnation and that its meaning would be made real for us. May we who are collectively members of the universal Church, live in the world as an incarnational people.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

This Christmas, as God's ambassadors and in preparation for Christ's birth, may we seek to communicate God's love to the world around us through acts of kindness and charity. In so doing, may people be reminded that the world is by no means devoid of the love of God, but rather, that it is us who are called to be its vehicles.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for our president, Cyril Ramaphosa. Particularly, we pray for his recovery from COVID and, as he and other cabinet ministers seek to steer the country in these challenging times, we continue to pray for the containment of the COVID pandemic and the harmful effects it may have on our economy.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Lord of heaven and earth, we give you heartfelt thanks for the passionate love you have for each of us. May we never lose sight of how cherished we are in your sight, and may we seek to live by the inherent dignity that is ours through being your children. As we draw nearer to Christmas, make us mindful of the multitude of people who suffer material lack and adverse circumstances. Being a God of the lowly and downtrodden, remind us to care for those who are vulnerable.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

God of all comfort, while we know Christmas is a time for expressions of love and joy, it is also a time when we naturally remember those we have lost. Perhaps, for many, this will be their first Christmas without the presence of a loved one. We therefore commit into your hands all those who have lost loved ones this past year. May you draw near to them as you provide them your comfort and peace.

Lord, in your mercy



**Hear our prayer**

Finally, heavenly Father, as we prepare to mark Christ's birth into the world once again, we give thanks for the witness borne by the lives of your faithful servants throughout the ages. May we too, by our faithfulness and acts of kindness, bear witness to the undying love of God.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Gracious Father – to live fully is to live a life of love. Grant us the grace to achieve this and fulfil these our humble petitions as may be best for us. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

*Prayer over the Offerings*

When we love fully and freely, we are freed from a fear of lack and from all covetousness. Let us place our trust in God our Provider as we bless these our tithes and offerings. May you accept them Lord as expressions of our love and gratitude and use them for the extension of your Kingdom. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

*The Lord's Prayer*

An Adaptation written by Lenora Band

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

Holy and Living God, as we approach Christmas, when we have been separated from family and friends, when it is hard to travel and gather together to celebrate, help us to embrace what is. May we be filled with gratitude for what we have, instead of grief for what we have lost. Help us to give thanks even within the uncertainty. Help us to give thanks within our sorrow, within our fears. In all things, may we open our hearts and give you thanks, being always mindful of your presence and provision in our lives. **Amen**

*Final Blessing*

Lord of Heaven and Earth, from the days of Moses until this gathering today, you have formed a people in your own image. Continue to bless us with your wisdom and guidance this Advent. May we serve you with our every desire, and by our actions, show how much we care for you and our sister and brother. And may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve and keep us, this day and forevermore. **Amen**

*Dismissal*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. **Amen**

*Recessional Hymn*

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
Tender to me the promise of his word;  
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;  
His holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.**



Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
To children's children and forever more!

Author: Timothy Dudley-Smith (born 1926)



*Giving*

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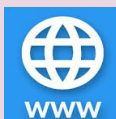
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