

# Fourth Sunday of Advent

24 December 2023

## Collect

Gracious God,  
whose eternal Word took flesh among us  
when Mary placed her life at the service of your will:  
prepare our hearts for his coming again  
and keep us steadfast in hope,  
that we may be ready for the coming of his kingdom;  
for his sake, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## 1st Reading

### 2 Samuel 7.1–11, 7.16

<sup>1</sup> Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' <sup>3</sup> Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.' <sup>4</sup> But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup> Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord : Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup> I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' <sup>8</sup> Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup> and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a

place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup> from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

## Psalm

### Psalm 89.1–4, 89.19–27

- <sup>1</sup> Lord, I will sing for ever of your loving-kindnesses:  
my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness  
throughout all generations.
- <sup>2</sup> I have said of your loving-kindness  
that it is built for ever:  
you have established your faithfulness in the heavens.
- <sup>3</sup> The Lord said 'I have made a covenant with my chosen:  
I have sworn an oath to my servant David.
- <sup>4</sup> 'I will establish your line for ever:  
and build up your throne for all generations.'
- <sup>19</sup> You spoke once in a vision:  
and said to your faithful one,
- <sup>20</sup> 'I have set a youth above a warrior:  
I have exalted a young man out of the people.
- <sup>21</sup> 'I have found my servant David:  
and anointed him with my holy oil.
- <sup>22</sup> 'My hand shall uphold him:  
and my arm shall strengthen him.
- <sup>23</sup> 'No enemy shall deceive him:  
nor shall the wicked hurt him.
- <sup>24</sup> 'I will crush his adversaries before him:  
and strike down those that hate him.
- <sup>25</sup> 'My faithfulness and loving-kindness shall be with him:  
and through my name his head shall be lifted high.
- <sup>26</sup> 'I will set the hand of his dominion  
upon the Western Sea:

and his right hand shall stretch  
to the streams of Mesopotamia.  
<sup>27</sup> 'He will call to me "You are my Father:  
my God, and the Rock of my salvation."

## 2nd Reading

### Romans 16.25–27

<sup>25</sup> Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

## Gospel

### Luke 1.26–38

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.' <sup>38</sup> 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.