

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY in ADVENT
DECEMBER 18, 2016**

Psalm *(spoken in unison)*

Psalm 24 (antiphon: v. 7)

C ¹The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
²for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.
³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
⁶Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.
⁷Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
⁸Who is this King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!
⁹Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
¹⁰Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory!

Collect of the Day

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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Reading*Isaiah 7:10–17*

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

Reading*Romans 1:1–7*

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reading*Matthew 1:18–25*

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:
²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

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