Advent 4B readings: December 20th, 2026

The Collect: God of impossible love, you needed Mary to give consent, to bear the scandal, to carry your word within herself: may her courage give hope to women and men who yearn to sing new songs of justice and find the world a dwelling place for God; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. Amen. *Prayers for an Inclusive Church*

Old Testament

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 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." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you." But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 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. 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?" 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; 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. 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, 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Response

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

1 Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing; *
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
2 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; *
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.
3 "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; *
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
4 'I will establish your line for ever, *
and preserve your throne for all generations.'"
19 You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: *
"I have set the crown upon a warrior
and have exalted one chosen out of the people.
20 I have found David my servant; *
with my holy oil have I anointed him.
21 My hand will hold him fast *
and my arm will make him strong.
22 No enemy shall deceive him, *
nor any wicked man bring him down.
23 I will crush his foes before him *
and strike down those who hate him.

24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, *
and he shall be victorious through my Name.
25 I shall make his dominion extend *
from the Great Sea to the River.
26 He will say to me, 'You are my Father, *
my God, and the rock of my salvation.'

The Epistle
Romans 16:25-27
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 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-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The Gospel
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, favored 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 favor 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.