

**A reading from Malachi 4. You can find the reading on page 802 in your pew Bible.**

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

**The Word of the Lord.**  
***Thanks be to God.***

Please join me in praying Psalm 139:13-18.

Leader: For you formed my inward parts;  
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

**People: I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Leader: Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well.

**People: My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

Leader: Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written, every one of them,

**People: the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.**

Leader: How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!

**People: If I would count them, they are more than the sand.  
I awake, and I am still with you.**

**All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it  
was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Leader: Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.**

*(allow them time to stand)*

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Luke.**

***People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

**Leader: The Gospel of the Lord**

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

**Leader: You may be seated.**