

First Presbyterian Church

Service for the Lord's Day

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 20, 2020

10:00 a.m.

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Call to Worship

from Isaiah 54

Sing, O barren one who did not bear;

burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor!

Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;

do not be discouraged, for you will not suffer disgrace;

For the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,

the God of the whole earth he is called.

* Hymn 123

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King":
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
- 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!
- 4 And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.
- 5 For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

* Call to Confession

* Prayer of Confession

God our Savior, we ask for your mercy.

The days are hastening on

as we watch for Mary's Son to be born among us.

We have complicated these holy days

and cluttered our hearts with unnecessary burdens.

***Our lives are filled with distractions,
and we worry about matters we cannot fix.
Grant us grace and peace.
Fill our hearts with child-like wonder.
Enlarge our minds with visions of your truth.
Interrupt our fears with angel song,
that we would welcome the Christ when he draws near.***

* Silent Confession

* Assurance of Pardon and Passing of the Peace

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Light one candle for love.
Because the world is broken and the wait is long,
but love never ends.

***Love faithfully goes about the work of
casting out fear, speaking truth,
healing the deepest wounds,
crossing the divide from this world to the next and back again.***

“Here I am,” she whispers, “the servant of the Lord.”

***So we light one candle, because it only takes one:
Christ with us.***

Instrumental Response

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Lesson: 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.

Biblical Song: Song of Mary (Hymnal 99)

- 1 My soul gives glory to my God; my heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.
- 2 My God has done great things for me: yes, holy is God's name.
All people will declare me blessed, and blessings they shall claim.

- 3 From age to age to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,
dispensing justice far and near, dismissing selfish hearts.
- 4 Love casts the mighty from their thrones, promotes the insecure,
leaves hungry spirits satisfied; the rich seem suddenly poor.
- 5 Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,
remembering past promises with present faithfulness.

A Moment with Our Children

Second Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Sermon: "New Life in a Dead Stump"

Rev. Carter

Advent Series: What Isaiah Could See

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn 129

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.
- 2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind; with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.
- 3 This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.

Affirmation of Faith

A Declaration of Faith (PCUS) 4.1

***Jesus, the long expected Savior, came into the world as a child,
descended from David, conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of Mary, a virgin.***

He lived as a Jew among Jews.

He announced to his people

the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth.

***We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child,
yet born of God's power as was no other child.***

***In the person and work of Jesus,
God himself and a human life are united but not confused,
distinguished but not separated.
The coming of Jesus was itself the coming of God's promised rule.
Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,
he brings about the relationship between God and humanity
that God always intended.***

Offering
Offertory

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

GO IN GOD'S NAME

Hymn 145

"What Child Is This"

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

"While By My Sheep"

arr. Gordon Young

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PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Pastor	Rev. William Carter
Liturgist	Laura Moore
Coordinator for Children and Youth Ministries	Jana Schillinger
Director of Music	Frank Jones
Organist	Kay Ten Eyck
Director of Bells	Richard Cochrane

Church Family Announcements

Special Announcement: We are returning to online-only worship

At the special Session meeting on December 13, our elders voted unanimously to **return to online-only worship**. Sadly, the covid-19 virus is raging through our region and we are not willing to put our members and friends at risk. We are disappointed that the public health situation has forced us to make this decision. However, we are also happy to have the equipment and experience to lead worship services on **our YouTube channel**. We are ready to celebrate Christmas with you!

The **church office** remains open during regular hours. All visitors are required to wear masks. To ensure our availability, **it may be a good idea to call ahead** and set an appointment if you plan to stop by. Sometimes the outer door may be locked - especially if there is a blizzard.

Our plan is to continue online-only worship **through the month of January**. We will notify you when the situation changes.

Join us on YouTube Monday, December 21 for the **Blue Christmas service** at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

Family Service at 4:00 p.m. - We will offer a simple online service for our children and their families **on our YouTube channel**. We will hear the Christmas story, pray, and sing. At the conclusion, we will sing "Silent Night," so **bring your own candle**, flashlight, or glow stick.

Live-Stream of Lessons and Carols at 8:00 p.m. - Drawing on the musical talent of our church family, this service will feature scripture readings and musical selections on the theme of light in the darkness. It will take place online **on our YouTube channel**. Again, it's a "bring your own candle" service when we conclude with "Silent Night."

Live-Stream of Jazz Christmas Eve at 11:00 p.m. - The Presbybop Christmas Eve Band will offer a jazz service, broadcast live **on our YouTube channel**. As with the earlier two services, "bring your own candle." Enjoy the jazz Christmas carols of Mike Carbone on sax, Tony Marino on bass, Marko Marcinko on percussion, and Rev. Bill on piano. If the hour is too late for you, watch it any time on that same link.

Tell us your prayer concerns. Prayer Requests may be submitted through a link on our webpage.

The 2020 Advent Bible Study, led by Rev. Carter, concludes this **Wednesday, December 23, at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.**

First Presbyterian Church
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