

Third Week of Advent

Sunday, December 13, 2020

Sunday Morning Worship

Please join us online for worship this morning. The video will go "live" at 10:30am.

Call to Worship

My soul magnifies the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; God sends good news to the oppressed.

Rejoice in the Lord; again, rejoice! Be gentle to all: the Lord is near.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you. Now prepare the world for your rule. Come quickly to save us, so that wars and violence shall end, and your children may live in peace, honoring one another with justice and love; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Light the two purple candles and the pink candle.

Light one candle for peace. Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but we refuse to be frozen by fear. Peace comes in fits and starts a deep breath, a courageous truth, a humble heart. "Prepare the way," she whispers, "for the Lord comes to make the broken whole." So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

Sung Response

We Gather 'Round

by Rev. Elana Keppel Levy

We gather 'round so weary for peace,

Hearing anger and distrust that will not cease –

Not cease 'til the day we reach out with grace

And see each as God's child for us to embrace.

The candles glow, showing us God's light, Calling us forward, united in Christ.

Invitation to Confession

Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts through our lives and relationships. But God is able to restore us. Like water coursing through a desert, the waters of baptism flow through us, reminding us that we belong to God and are raised to new life. Remembering this promise, let us confess our sin.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, you love justice; why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form of evil? You have given us the gift of your Spirit; why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us? You have given us the words of the prophets and the Word himself; why, then, do we despise and ignore what we have heard from you? You have sent the light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light? Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us! Even if we have gone out in tears, God brings us home shouting for joy. Thanks be to God: we are forgiven!

Prayer of Illumination

Holy One, giver of life and light, as your word is read and proclaimed, illumine our hearts and minds, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives may reflect God's glory. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly

host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

Matthew 2:1-15

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

Sermon

"Happy Xmas (War is Over)"

Third in a series, "The Christmas Playlist"

Musical Reflection

“Happy Xmas (War is Over)”

Prayers of Intercession and The Lord’s Prayer

God who restores, you have done great things for us and we rejoice! So often you have filled us with laughter, even turning tears of sadness into shouts of joy. You send prophets, who point the way to justice and show the way to you. We thank you for sending good news to us and repairing so much that we have devastated.

In this season of light, we lift up in prayer so many who wait in darkness: people oppressed by poverty and discrimination, by political upheaval or dangerous rulers; people imprisoned wrongly and also those imprisoned justly. Right what is wrong among us and restore us to you, to others, to ourselves. Make the brokenhearted whole again; comfort those who mourn; repair our ruined cities. In all the jostling and jingling of these days, do not let us lose sight of you or those whom you especially came to serve: people who are in need of healing, people who are overlooked or underserved, the ones who are lost, and the ones we have made to feel little and least.

Light of the world, live among us always, full of grace and truth. Hear us as we join our prayers to the one prayer You taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory forever. Amen.

Benediction and Sending

