

MIDTOWN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Evening Worship

Fourth Sunday in Advent

12.19.2021

Welcome to Worship at Midtown! We are really glad to have you with us for worship today. Whether you have been a Christian for many years, or are trying to sort out what the Christian faith is all about, or are just here as a favor to your friend, we're happy to have you.

We have a nursery provided for little ones. You are welcome to keep them in the service with you if you prefer.

Reflection

But to see the law by Christ fulfilled, to hear his pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child, and duty to choice.

—William Cowper

When [Jesus] spoke of the Scripture needing to be fulfilled, he was thinking of the entire storyline at last coming to fruition, and of an entire world of hints and shadows now coming to plain statement and full light.

—Tom Wright

The Word

Call to Worship—

Lighting of the Peace Candle

The first candle in the Advent wreath, the Prophecy Candle, reminds us of the prophets' hope for God's salvation to come.

The second candle, the Bethlehem Candle, reminds us of Jesus' humility in coming to earth and being born in a stall.

The third candle, the Shepherd's Candle, reminds us of the joy of the shepherds as they heard the good news of Jesus' arrival.

The fourth candle is the Angels' candle. It reminds us of the angels' song of peace for all the earth, as we find in Luke's gospel: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'"

Let us stand and sing as we celebrate the coming of God to the world.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Music & Lyrics: John F. Wade



O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - umph - phant; O
come, ye, O come - ye to Beth - le - hem. Come and be - hold him,
born the King of an - gels; O come let us a - dore him, O come let us a -
dore him, O come let us a - dore him - Christ - the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]

God of God, Light of Light;
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb.
Very God, begotten not created; [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! [Refrain]

Prayer of Invocation

Call to Confession of Sin

John 3:17

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Confession of Sin

Lord Jesus Christ, we confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love but also our refusal to forgive and love others. We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love but also our resistance to follow you without question.

In this Advent time, forgive us our failure to respond as we should. Come to us anew, and by your grace, help us to receive you with joy, as the shepherds; with gratitude, as Simeon; with obedience, as Mary; with love, as you have loved us. Even so: come, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

We confess our sins as a group and individually because we need to. We come to worship God even though we are morally broken, in certain hope that he is merciful to people like us, and able to change us by his grace.

Trisagion

Music: Fernando Ortega

Ho - - - ly - God. Ho - ly and migh - ty.

Ho - - - - ly, Im - mor - tal one. Have

mer - cy, have mer - - cy on us.

Assurance of Forgiveness

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Minister: May the peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

All Praise To Thee Eternal Lord

Lyrics: Martin Luther; Music: American folk tune

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and folk-like. The lyrics are written below the notes.

All praise to thee, e - ter - nal Lord, clothed in a garb of
flesh and blood; choos - ing a man - ger
for thy throne, while worlds on worlds are thine a - lone.

Once did the skies before Thee bow; A virgin's arms contain Thee now,
While angels, who in Thee rejoice, Now listen for Thine infant voice.

A little Child, Thou art our Guest, That weary ones in Thee may rest;
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth; That we may rise to heaven from earth.

Thou comest in the darksome night To make us children of the light;
To make us, in the realms divine, Like Thine own angels round Thee shine.

All this for us Thy love hath done; By this to Thee our love is won;
For this we tune our cheerful lays, And sing our thanks in ceaseless praise.

The Prayers of the People

[Pray the bold portions aloud together]

[Led by Nick Davis]

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

Father Eternal, God Almighty,
you have brought forth from the root of Jesse a
shoot, Jesus our Savior.

**He is your anointed one, the promised
Messiah; in him you are well pleased.**

We come to you in his service,

**To offer our prayers of intercession for the coming of
his kingdom.**

The prayers of the people enable us to join our minds and hearts in one voice to God, like we do when we sing. Be careful about merely repeating the words without engaging your whole self in prayer.

Father Eternal,

You have anointed Jesus to be both Lord and Christ.

**We pray for the Church of Christ that she might be
faithful to her Lord, bearing witness to his reign in every
land among every people.**

(Pray for the protection and expansion of the Church in the world.)

Father Eternal,

You have anointed Jesus King of kings and Lord of lords.

**We pray for the rulers of our nation that they might be
wise, fearing the Lord to whom they must bow in the
world to come.**

(Pray for our political leaders.)

Father Eternal,

You have anointed Jesus a counselor and comforter of your people.

**We pray for those among us who suffer,
For those who are lonely,
For those without home or family,
For those who are depressed and discouraged,
For those who are seeking work,
For those who are sick,
For those who are grieving.**

(Pray for those who suffer.)

Praise, honor and glory belong to you, Eternal Father,

And to your Son, who 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 the glory forever.
Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

[Reader: Nancy Price]

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading

Romans 10:4

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Angels We Have Heard on High —Christmas Choir

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:17-20

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Minister: The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Rev. Charles Garland

The Table

Confession of Faith

The Apostles' Creed

We use the ancient creeds to reinforce our confidence in God's grace, and to highlight our connection to his people around the world who worship him with these same words every Lord's Day.

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was
conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and
buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose
again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is
seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the
dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the
communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Invitation and Prayer

[Communion, also called The Lord's Supper or the Eucharist, is the family meal of Christians. We invite all committed followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer.]

The Sursum Corda (Lift Up Your Hearts)

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Minister: Let us give thanks to our Lord God.

All: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

The Words of Institution

The Sursum Corda and the Mystery of Faith are used by Christians the world over to prepare their hearts and minds for Holy Communion.

The Mystery of Faith

Minister: Therefore, let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen.**

Christ will come again!

Minister: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

All: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

Minister: The gifts of God for the people of God.

The Giving of the Bread and Cup

[As you are ready please come forward to receive the bread and the cup. We are using individual cups and wafers as a concession to the virus. The red cups have wine and the grape juice is white/gold.]

O Holy Night

Music: John Sullivan Dwight; Lyrics: Placide Cappeau

4
O Ho - ly night the stars are bright-ly shin - ing it is the

8
night of our dear Sav-ior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and er-ror

12
pin - ing 'til he ap-peared and the soul felt its worth. a thrill of hope the

15
wea - ry world re-joi - ces for yon - der breaks a new and glo-rious morn.

20
Fall on your knees, O hear the the an-gel voi - ces. O night di -

23
vine; O night when Christ was born. O

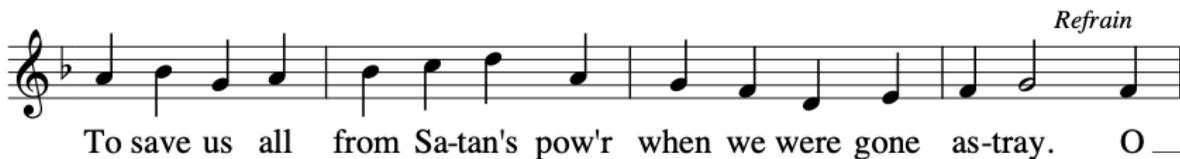
night di - vine O night O night di - vine.

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise;
Let all within us praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Traditional



From God our heav'nly Father, a blessed angel came;
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born the son of God by name. [Refrain]

"Fear not, then," said the angel, "let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in him
from Satan's pow'r and might." [Refrain]

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding, in tempest, storm, and wind:
And went to Bethlehem straightway, the Son of God to find. [Refrain]

Benediction

Notes

Offering: We have placed an offering box at the back of the sanctuary that you can use as you enter or leave. (Note that the Midtown box is separate from the Vineyard ones—ours cleverly says “Midtown”!) You can also give online at our website www.mpctucson.org.

Email List: We send out the bulletin and announcements every week before worship and would love to include you. You can email Charles (charles@mpctucson.org) to get on the list.

Ladies Prayer Group: Our next meeting will be at Shelly Gauger’s, 525 S. 4th Avenue, at 1:30 pm. December 21st.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: We are going to meet at Himmel Park for our Christmas Eve Service at 5:00pm. We’ll all need to bring **chairs** and **phones** for the song lyrics. Park at the north end of the park and we’ll meet between the library and the tennis courts. Sundown is 5:25 which should be right around candle lighting time.

Midtown Banquet: Mark your calendars for Friday evening, January 14th. We are going to have a dinner at Culinary Dropout and celebrate and anticipate the near future for our church.

Donations for refugee family: We anticipate receiving our Afghan family in January. We are collecting household donations to stock their apartment. Gently used items are welcome, as well as new. Kitchen supplies, towels, sheets, furniture, mattresses are all things they will need. Coats and clothes too, though, of course, we won't know sizes until we receive our family. So please keep this in mind as new Christmas gifts might make your donation pile grow.

Pastor: Charles Garland
Minister in Residence: Nick Davis
Music Director: Sarah Lewis
RUF Staff: Dan & Brittany Smith
RUF Intern: Rebekah Taylor

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