



MIDTOWN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Evening Worship

The Third Sunday in Advent

12.16.2018

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 in the patio room. You are welcome to keep them in the service with you if you prefer.

Worship Note

Lord Jesus,
Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" Amen.

--Henri J.M. Nouwen

Reflection

Christmas, then, is not a dream, a moment of escapism. Christmas is the reality, which shows up the rest of "reality." And for Christmas, here, read Christianity. Either Jesus is the Lord of the world, and all reality makes sense in his light, or he is dangerously irrelevant to the problems and possibilities of today's world. There is no middle ground. Either Jesus was, and is, the Word of God, or he, and the stories Christians tell about him, are lies.

--N.T. Wright

The Word

Call to Worship

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 reminds us of the joy of the shepherds as they heard the good news of Jesus' arrival, for: "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them" (Luke 2:20).

As we light the Shepherd's Candle we remember that it wasn't the rich and famous who came to worship Jesus that first Christmas Eve, but poor shepherds. Through Jesus Christ, God invites us, as his children, those who are "poor in spirit," to come into His presence and worship Him.

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

Angels We Have Heard on High

Music & Lyrics: Traditional French Carol



An-gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plain;



and the moun-tains in re-ply, ech-o back their joy-ous strains.



Glo - - - - - ri-a. In ex-cel-sis De - o,



Glo - - - - - ri-a. In ex-cel-sis De - o.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heav'nly song?

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the new-born King.

Prayer of Invocation

Call to Confession of Sin

Luke 1:51-54

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy.

Confession of Sin

[You are invited to confess your sins silently at this time.]

Come, O Redeemer, Come

Music & Lyrics: Fernando Ortega

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'Fa - ther en-throned on high; Ho - ly, ho - ly. An - cient e - ter - nal Light; hear our prayer; Come, O Re-deem-er, come; grant us mer-cy. Come, O Re-deem-er, come; grant us peace.'

Fa - ther en-throned on high; Ho - ly, ho - ly.
An - cient e - ter - nal Light; hear our prayer;
Come, O Re-deem-er, come; grant us mer-cy.
Come, O Re-deem-er, come; grant us peace.

Lord, save us from the dark, of our striving,
Faithless and troubled hearts, weighed down.
Come, oh Redeemer, come, grant us mercy.
Come, oh Redeemer, come, grant us peace.

Look now upon our need, Lord be with us.
Heal us and make us free, from our sin.
Come, oh Redeemer, come, grant us mercy.
Come, oh Redeemer, come, grant us peace.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Luke 1:68-69

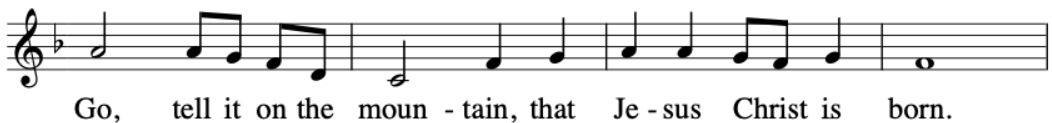
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

Minister: May the peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

Go Tell It On The Mountain

Refrain



Verse



The shepherds feared and trembled, when, lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]

Down in a lowly manger our humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]

The Prayers of the People

(Please pray aloud together.)

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

Our Lord Jesus Christ,

You came into the world to destroy the works of the devil:

**We ask you to restrain the wickedness in our city by
your Law.**

**We ask you to destroy the wickedness in our own
hearts by your Spirit.**

**We pray that you would protect us from the temptations,
deceit and accusations of the devil.**

(Pray silently that God would deliver you from evil.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ,

You came into the world to bring us peace with God:

We pray for peace between nations in Your world;

**We pray that this congregation might live in your peace
together;**

**We ask you to come again soon to fully establish your peace
on earth.**

(Pray silently for God to bring peace to the earth.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ,

You came into the world to seek and save that which was lost:

**We pray for our friends who do not yet know you;
We pray for the deepening of our faith in the gospel of
grace.**

(Pray silently for the spread of the good news.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ,

You came into the world to destroy death

and to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel:

**We pray for comfort for those who are suffering
in grief,
in poverty,
in sickness,
in injustice.**

(Pray silently for those who are suffering.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ,

We pray now in the words you taught us:

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.

New Testament Reading

Philippians 4:4-7

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Matthew 10:29-31

Reader: The Gospel of Jesus Christ

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

Come Light Our Hearts

Lyrics & Music: Sandra McCracken

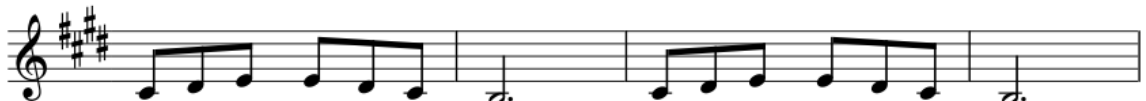
Chorus



For You, O Lord, our souls in still - ness wait.




For You, O Lord, our souls in still - ness wait.



Tru-ly our hope is in You, Tru-ly our hope is in You.

Verse



O Lord of life, our on - ly hope, Your ra-dience shines on all who



look to You in the dark, E-mman -u-el come, come light our hearts.

Oh joy above, all other love, In You we find, more than enough.
We come as we are, O heal and restore, Come Light our hearts. [Chorus]

Old Testament Reading

Ruth 3

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? ² Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.³ Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." ⁵ And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸ At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! ⁹ He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings^[a] over your servant, for you are a redeemer." ¹⁰ And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. ¹² And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. ¹³ Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵ And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. ¹⁶ And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her,¹⁷ saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" ¹⁸ She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Charles Garland

The Table

Confession of Faith

—From the Belgic Confession

**We profess that God fulfilled the promise
that he had made to the early fathers
by the mouth of his holy prophets
when he sent his only and eternal Son into the world
at the time set by him.**

**The Son took the “form of a servant”
and was made in the “likeness of man,”
truly assuming a real human nature,
with all its weaknesses, except for sin;
being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
without male participation.**

**And he not only assumed human nature
as far as the body is concerned
but also a real human soul,
in order that he might be a real human being.**

**For since the soul had been lost as well as the body,
he had to assume them both to save them both together.**

**In this way he is truly our Immanuel—
that is: “God with us.”**

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.]

Sursum Corda

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.**

Words of Institution

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 provide individual cups of grape juice and gluten-free wafers in the tray at the front. We partake in the Supper by intinction, that is, we dip the bread into the cup. Children who have not yet professed their faith in Christ nor been admitted to the Table are encouraged to come forward for a prayer of blessing.]

Once In David's Royal City

Lyrics & Music: Cecil Frances Alexander



Once in roy - al Da-vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,



Where a moth - er laid her ba - by In a man - ger for his bed:



Ma-ry was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.

He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and mean, and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heav'n above,
And he leads his children on, to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
We shall see him, but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned, all in white shall wait around.

The First Noel



The first no - el, the an - gel did say, was to cer - tain poor
shep - herds in fields as they lay. In fields where they lay -
keep - ing their sheep on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep. No -
el, no - el, no - el.
Born is the King of Is - - ra - el.

They looked up and saw a star, shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and
night. [Refrain]

And by the light of that same star, Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it
went. [Refrain]

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made Heaven and earth of naught,
And with His blood mankind hath bought. [Refrain]

Benediction

Notes

Offering: We have placed an offering box in the back of the nave that you can use as you enter or leave, or as you come to communion. You can also give online at our website www.mpctucson.org.

Email List: Please sign up for our email list on the table in the back. We send out the bulletin and announcements every week before worship and would love to include you.

Women4Truth Conference: Aimee Byrd speaking at New Valley Church in Chandler, February 23rd. Sign up at www.women4truth.com

Christmas Eve Service: We will meet here on Christmas Eve at 6:30 p.m. for a Lessons and Carols service

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A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

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