



MIDTOWN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Evening Worship

Second Sunday in Advent
12.10.2023

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

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—



Lighting of the Peace Candle

The second candle of Advent is the Candle of Peace. It is sometimes called the Bethlehem Candle to remind us of the place in which preparations were made to receive and cradle the Christ child.

The second candle reminds us of Jesus' humility in coming to earth and being born in a stall, as Luke records: "This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

The prophet Isaiah calls Christ "the Prince of Peace." Through John the Baptist and all the other prophets, God asks us to prepare our hearts so that he may come in.

Our hope is in God, and in his son Jesus Christ. Our peace is found in him. We light this candle today to remind us that he brings peace to all who trust in him.

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

Romans 3:19-20

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father, We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

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

Kyrie Eleison

Music: Greg Wilbur

Lord, have mer-cy. Lord, have mer-cy.

Lord, have mer-cy. Have mer-cy Lord.

Assurance of Pardon

Romans 3:23-24

For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Minister: May the peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Music: Lewis Redner; Lyrics: Phillip Brooks

O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie; a -
bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by. Yet
in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light; the
hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.

For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

The Prayers of the People

[Pray the bold portions aloud together]

[Led by Matt McReynolds]

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.

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.)

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 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.**

New Testament Reading

[Reader: Yunuen Jankowski]

1 Timothy 1:15-17

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:26-33

Reader: The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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

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.

Old Testament Reading

Ruth 1

¹In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the

hand of the Lord has gone out against me.” ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.” ¹⁸And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?” ²⁰She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”

²²So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Matt Esswein

The Table

Confession of Faith

The Apostles' Creed

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 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. Take bread and eat it, then take a cup and drink. If you prefer grape juice and/or a gluten free wafer, they are available on the middle table.]

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Lyrics: James Montgomery; Music: Vito Aiuto

The musical score is written on four staves of a treble clef in 3/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are: "Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater son! Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free, to take away transgression, and rule in equity."

Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater son! _
Hail, in the time — ap - pointed, his reign on earth be-gun! _
He comes to break _ op - pression, _ to set the cap-tive free, _
to take _ a - way _ trans-gres-sion, _ and rule in e - qui - ty. _

He comes, with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong;
To help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for singing, their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers spring in his path to birth;
Before him on the mountains shall peace the herald go;
And righteousness, like fountains from hill to valley flow.

To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend,
His kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never his covenant remove;
His name shall stand for ever: his name alone is love.

Go Tell It On The Mountain

Traditional

Refrain



Go, tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where; -



Go, tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born.

Verse



While shep - hers kept their watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night, be -



hold, through - out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light -

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]

Benediction

Notes

Offering: We have placed an offering box at the back of the sanctuary that you can use as you enter or leave. Online, you can give at (www.mpctucson.org/donate). —>>



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.

Christmas Eve Service: Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year we will have our regular worship service here at the Vineyard at 5pm.

Men's Book Group: The next book is The Puritan Dilemma: the story of John Winthrop by Edmund Morgan. We will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 7pm.

Solstice Lament Service: Prayer service of lament for the brokenness we experience in the world. December 21st. Hannah Johnson has details (hjohnson2706@hotmail.com).

Pastor: Charles Garland
Music Director: Sarah Lewis
Nursery Director: Sami Skaare
RUF Staff: Matt & Sarah Esswein
RUF Intern: Paige Jackson

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