

“Finding Our Way Into Love”

GATHERING: PREPARING TO HEAR THE WORD

In Preparation for Worship

“The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.”

— John 1:14 (The Message, by Eugene Petersen)

As the lights are dimmed, please watch for the coming of the light.

Bringing the Light

Lauren and Christian Vanderkaay (8:30a)

Kelly and Sandy VanBrouwer (11:00a)

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Advent Candle

(Adapted: Isaiah 11:6 + 'I Will Light Candles This Christmas' by Howard Thurman)

One: As the Lord has promised in days to come:

All: The Lord will give us a sign—The young woman shall bear a son.

One: And she will name him Emmanuel, which means, “God with us.”

All: We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ:

One: A candle of hope where despair keeps watch.

A candle of peace for these tempest-tossed days.

And a candle of joy despite all the sadness.

And a candle of love to embolden our hearts,

for Love is making a way.

All: Praise the Love who has come and is coming again!

Let us walk in the light of the Lord! Amen.

Opening Voluntary (A musical prayer offered on behalf of the people of God.)

“Joy to the World”

arr. Susann McDonald

Beth Colpean, Harp

Sharing the Life of Westminster

Rev. Jeremy Bork

++ Hymn 110

“Love Has Come”

Bring A Torch

Call to Confession

Rev. Jen Porter

(Trusting that God is love, we express our lament, our brokenness, and our failings to God.)

Prayer of Confession

God who is always with us, we say we long to be your people, but when you show us the way, we tend to cling to our former, safer ways. You invite us to hope, and we allow cynicism to grip our souls. You invite us to peace, and we allow fear to keep us from reconciling with ourselves and with others. You invite us to joy, and we allow our worries and needs to quench the joy you give us. You invite us to love, and we hide from You, ourselves, each other and the troubles of this world. Forgive us, gracious God and heal us as individuals and as a people. May we offer space for your hope, peace, joy, and love to be born again in us this Christmastime. In the name of Emmanuel we pray...

Silent Confession

Kyrie - Unison

“Lord, Have Mercy”

John Weaver



The Assurance of God's Grace

One: Comfort, comfort my people, says our God.

All: All our sins are pardoned. All our debts are paid.

One: Speak tenderly to one another, for we are all God's beloved.

All: Nothing is too hidden or too deep to escape the reach of God's love. Nothing.

One: In Christ, we are completely known, completely loved, and completely forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia. Amen.

++ Response Hymn 103 (Stanza 2, sing twice)

Come now, O God of love; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.

++ The Passing of the Peace (A sign of forgiveness and reconciliation.)

One: Christ came, in the fullness of time, teaching us to love one another.

All: For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

One: The commandments are summed up in this word:

Love your neighbor as yourself. And bear one another's burdens.

All: In this way we will fulfill the law of Christ.

One: May the love of God dwell in your hearts, and may the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Ministry of Music

“Silent Night”

Beth Colpean, Harp

Franz Gruber

Blessings with Younger Disciples

(Children three years through second grade may finish their time of worship in the Worship Centers. Children's worship leaders or parents will shepherd them from the Sanctuary to their rooms. Parents may pick them up in their worship rooms following the service.)

In the pews: May the Lord be with each of you as you worship together.

Children: And may the Lord be with each of you as you worship together.

In the pews: Go in peace!

THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

(We pray that the words of Scripture may be encountered as God's Word.)

Scripture

Isaiah 7:10-16

Old Testament p. 636

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Finding Our Way Into Love

Rev. Laurie Hartzell

Scripture

Isaiah 7:10-16

Old Testament p. 636

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Prayer of The People and The Lord's Prayer

Elizabeth Topliffe (8:30a)

Amy Strand (11:00a)

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Call for the Offering - Signing of the Friendship Register

(Please sign the friendship pad and pass it down the pew. Thank you!)

Offertory

(8:30a)

“We Three Kings of Orient Are”

arr. Susann McDonald

Beth Colpean, Harp

(11:00a)

“Shepherd's Pipe Carol”

John Rutter

Going through the hills on a night all starry on the way to Bethlehem, Far away I heard a shepherd boy piping on the way to Bethlehem.

Angels in the sky brought this message nigh: “Dance and sing for joy that Christ the newborn King is come to bring us peace on earth, and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem.”

“Tell me, shepherd boy piping tunes so merrily on the way to Bethlehem, who will hear your tunes on these hills so lonely on the way to Bethlehem?”

“None may hear my pipes on these hills so lonely on the way to Bethlehem; but a King will hear me play sweet lullabies when I get to Bethlehem.”

“Where is the new King, shepherd boy piping merrily? Is he there at Bethlehem?” “I will find him soon by the star shining brightly in the sky o'vr Bethlehem.”

“May I come with you, shepherd boy piping merrily, come with you to Bethlehem? Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle, is it far to Bethlehem?”

Angels in the sky brought this message nigh: “Dance and sing for joy that Christ the newborn King is come to bring us peace on earth, and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem.”

Beth Colpean, Harp

Sanctuary Choir

++ Doxology (means “words of glory”—they are a traditional expression of praise to God.)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!

GOING OUT TO BE THE CHURCH

++ Prayer of Dedication

Faithful God, you have come into our neighborhood once again. You have welcomed us, you have breathed love into our lives and reminded us of who we are and Whose we are. Send us your Spirit that we may bring the hope, peace, joy, and love of this season into our neighborhoods, too. In the name of Emmanuel, we pray, Amen.

++ Hymn 136

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Go Tell It

++ Charge and Benediction

Closing Voluntary

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Daniel Pinkham

The Charge

Go into the world in peace. Have courage. Hold on to all that is good. Return no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted. Support the weak and help the suffering. Honor all people. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

ADVENT:2019
FINDING OUR WAY



Artwork created by "Artists in Advent" put on display in the chapel.

AHEAD IN WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
December 24

4:30 pm—An interactive service for all ages
Witnessing Christmas

Rev. Jen Porter, Associate Pastor
Nancy Greidanus, Minister for Children and Their Families

8:00 pm and 11:00 pm

What, Really, Is the Point of Christmas?

Rev. David Baak, Preaching
Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7

Music: 8:00p - Sanctuary Choir, Kirk Singers,
and Alumni Singers
Candlelight Service with Communion at 11:00p
11:00p - Lee Copenhaver, Cello

SUNDAY SERVICE AT 11:00A

December 29—ONE Service at 11:00a

First Sunday After Christmas Day

Rev. Dr. David A. Van Dyke, Preaching
Music: Jeff Wilkinson, Tenor

January 5, 2020—TWO Services 8:30a & 11:00a

The Second Sunday of Christmas

Rev. Dr. David A. Van Dyke, Preaching
Music: Sanctuary Choir at 11:00a

FAITH FORMATION OFFERINGS

Finding Our Way: Art in Advent
9:40 - 10:30 a.m. in the chapel

This fourth Sunday of Advent is our final week for the art pieces to be on display in the chapel. That space is open throughout the morning for people to come and go at their own timing. You are invited to move through the pieces taking in the scripture in prayer and reflection. Before the art there is a bookmark with the scripture for week three (Isaiah 35:1-10) and week four (Isaiah 7:10-16). You are welcome to take a bookmark with you. Week three includes a mural on Joy made by the senior high youth, and week four includes artwork by families and children from the worship center.

Thank you to families and to all the artists who participated in offering reflection on these advent texts through the visual arts.

Faith Formation offerings will resume on Sunday, January 12, 2020

Welcome to Westminster

If you are new to Westminster, this information may help you get oriented.

WELCOME

Join us after the service in the Gathering Place or Parlor for coffee and cookies and community.

ASSISTANCE

If you'd like a large-print bulletin or a hearing device, please ask one of the ushers at a sanctuary entrance. For T-loop hearing assistance, set your hearing aid to T.

CHILDREN

Children are welcome throughout the service! Please don't worry about their coos, questions, laughs, cries, or dropped markers. Stop by the Gathering Place shelves for special worship bags/folders and children's bulletins to help children engage with worship.

Staff and volunteers offer nursery care to little ones (0-3 years) from 8:20a until 15 minutes after the 11:00a service ends. A Moms' Nursing Room is available down the Children's Ministry hallway, accessible through the nursery.

Children ages 3 through 2nd-grade will be invited to continue worship in an interactive setting in our Nurturing (ages 3-4) and Worship (K-2nd grade) Centers. They'll wait for you at the end of the service in the Children's Ministry hallway off the Gathering Place.

616-456-1456 / westminstergr.org / Office Hours: Mon - Thurs. 9:00a - 4:00p

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

PreacherRev. Laurie Hartzell, Interim Executive Pastor & Transitional Leader
LiturgistsRev. Jeremy Bork, Minister for Youth and Their Families
.....Rev. Jen Porter, Minister for Faith Formation & Pastoral Care
.....Elizabeth Topliffe, Elder for Children's Ministries
.....Amy Strand, Elder for Adult Faith Formation

Minister of MusicHelen Hofmeister

Music for Worship

8:30a & 11:00a- Beth Colpean, Harp
11:00a - Sanctuary Choir
Janlee Richter, Accompanist

TODAY'S GREETERS

8:30a: Atrium Steve and Cheryl Wonch
Narthex Deb Mellentine
11:00a: Atrium Jerry Roper
Narthex Carolyn and Jim Morse

USHERS - Team C

8:30a: Doug and Joanie Dowling, John and Sue Porter
11:00a: Keith Combs, Kari and Chris Fuller, Ann and Jim Jarvis, Kevin Larr,
Ben and Sharon Vander Wilp, Rich Zimmerman

CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND WORKSHOPS: During Christmas holidays, there will be no children's choirs or children's workshops between the services **today and Sunday, December 29**. There will be worship centers and nursery during our worship services. Enjoy all our special Advent and Christmas worship experiences!

NURSERY 8:30 & 11:00a: Dan Prince and Staff

WORSHIP CENTER - 8:30a - Advent IV

Leader Jessica Herceg

Center 1 - 11:00a (5-year old & Kndg.) - Advent IV

Leader Elizabeth Topliffe

Center 2 - 11:00a (1st & 2nd graders) - Advent IV

Leader Sandy VanBrouwer
Greeter Davis Jennings

Nurturing Center - 11:00a - Good News!

Leader Kate Bylsma
Greeter Stephanie Wildey

Please remember in your prayers this week...

Christmas joy and blessings to all!

DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 22 - LUKE 1:46-55

On December 23, 1979, the now-sainted Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador wrote, "The salvation that we preach in Christ's Church is the same salvation that Mary believed in and that she initiated when she gave her consent and became fruitful with God's salvation. The church is zealous to guard Mary's belief, God's plan for salvation, and it will not let God's plan be lost in merely human plans...Every people's liberation effort will be effective and according to God's heart only if it lets faith in God's plan to save humanity pervade it." (Romero, *The Violence of Love*, 179).

Finding Our Way Into Love

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF
ADVENT

DECEMBER 22, 2019

8:30 & 11:00 A.M.