

KIRK IN THE HILLS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 31, 2023



Prelude Reflection on a Poem

Poem: An Open Door

(*On A Theme* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Look how long
the weary world waited,
locked in its lonely cell,
guilty as a prisoner.

As you can imagine,
it sang and whistled in the dark.
It hoped. It paced and pattered about,
tidying its little piles of inconsequence.

It wept from the weight of ennui,
draped like shackles on its wrists.
It raged and wailed against the walls
of its own plight.

But there was nothing
the world could do
to find its own freedom.
The door was shut tight.

It could only be opened
from the outside.

Who could believe the latch
would be turned by a pink flower —
the tiny hand
of a newborn baby?

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<http://www.journeywithjesus.net>*

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

10:00 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Christmas Concerto: Pastorale

Archangelo Corelli

* *Please rise in body or spirit at the ringing of the tower bell.*

* **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Rev. Dr. Andrew McDonald

The Lord is glorious in his saints:

O come, let us adore him.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;

Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving

And show ourselves glad in him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God.

O come, let us worship and fall down,

And kneel before the Lord our Maker.

The Lord is glorious in his saints:

O come, let us adore him.

* **PROCESSIONAL HYMN 108**

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Divinum Mysterium

* **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Rev. Dr. Andrew McDonald

We confess that we have sinned.

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

When we make no room for Christ,
and fail to welcome him into our lives,

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

When we follow shooting stars
and squander our gifts in Herod's court,

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

When we seek to cut down those
who might rise above us,

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

When we sanitize your birth place
and erase from memory the poor and displaced,

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

When we sing sweet sentiments over Christ's birth,
and fail to rejoice over his everyday presence,

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

We turn to you, O Christ,
perfect union of Spirit and flesh;

We renounce evil;

We claim your love;

We choose to be made whole.

* *Please rise in body or spirit.*

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE— Hymn 113 (*refrain only*)

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis deo.

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Dr. Andrew McDonald

In the coming of Jesus Christ,
more than two thousand years ago,
The world was changed forever.
May our hearts be changed,
And may we never be the same,
as we hear of God's love in Jesus Christ,
Coming to us anew. Believe and share the good news!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

In Jesus Christ, we are a new creation!

* GLORIA PATRI (*Hymn 581*)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen.**

Greatorex

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Edwin Estevez

SOLO

Mariä Wiegenlied

Max Reger

*Amid the roses Mary sits and rocks her Jesus child,
While amid the treetops sighs the breeze so warm and mild.
And soft and sweetly sings a bird upon the bough:
Ah! Baby, sleep, dear one, slumber now.

Happy is your laughter, holy is your silent rest,
Lay your head in slumber, fondly on your mother's breast.
Ah! Baby, sleep, dear one, slumber now.*

WORD WITH THE CHILDREN & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Kelsey Sorge

Following the Word with the Children, children and youth stay in worship.

**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.**

THANKSGIVING

* HYMN 144

In the Bleak Midwinter (*verses 1 & 4*)

Cranham

CALL TO OFFERING AND DEDICATION

Rev. Dr. Andrew McDonald

Our giving is an offering to God. All offerings are part of our worship of God and support the Kirk's ministry. Text "KITH" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.

OFFERTORY

I Wonder As I Wander

Appalachian carol, arr. Niles

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor orn'ry people like you and like I...
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.*

*When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.*

*If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause He was the king.*

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor orn'ry people like you and like I...
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.*

* **DOXOLOGY** (*Hymn 606*)

Old Hundredth

WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 148 (*OT, page 582*)
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Rev. Kelsey Sorge

SERMON

Praise

Rev. Edwin Estevez

* **HYMN 110**

Love Has Come

Bring a Torch

PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Kelsey Sorge

Gracious God, as a star rose, and drew people from great distances to Bethlehem that they might greet the Christ-child; Draw us, your Church, and all of your people to you – that we might be the Church and the People who you call us to be. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As you gave Mary your Holy Spirit, filling her with the delight of your Presence; Fill us with your Spirit, and renew our lives. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As Gentiles streamed to Jesus' Light, and Kings to the brightness of his rising; Draw our nation, our President, and all in authority, to His brightness. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As angels sang 'glorias' to you and proclaimed peace on earth, and goodwill among all peoples; Bring us your peace, and bring an end to and terror and strife. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As shepherds were drawn away from their flocks by night; Draw those who do not know you yet to the knowledge and love of you. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As Jesus was born in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn; Be especially present with those who have no where to lay their head, those who are vulnerable, and those who are hungry. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As the Holy Family gathered together in Bethlehem, and traveled together to far off lands; Bless all families, especially the families of our parish, and protect those who travel. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

As your son came to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of Life Eternal; Give to the departed eternal rest and let Light perpetual shine on them. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

For those who are sick. (silence)

For those who are serving in our armed forces. (silence)

For those who have died. (silence)

O Lord our God, may the Light and Hope of this season, and of your Son's Incarnation, reassure our hearts that you are among us, that you hear our prayer, and that you will be with us always, even to the end of the age. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth we pray.

Amen.

SENDING

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| * RECESSIONAL HYMN 151 | We Three Kings of Orient Are | <i>Kings of Orient</i> |
| CHARGE AND BENEDICTION | (<i>seated</i>) | Rev. Edwin Estevez |
| CLOSING VOLUNTARY | Noël Grand Jeu et Duo | <i>Louis-Claude Daquin</i> |

INFORMATION ON TODAY'S SERVICES

Worship/Music Notes

Today's Musicians: David Enos, associate organist; Terence Farmer, tenor

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Stephen Ministers are available for personal, confidential prayer in Melrose Chapel immediately following each service Sunday. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer please contact Nancy Lau at 248-835-6691.



Cover Art: Psalm 148 by John Stuart, used with permission.

Originally from Scotland, John Stuart has served as a Presbyterian pastor for almost forty years. His work has been used by churches all over the world and has been featured on covers of religious magazines. John's artist name is Stushie which is a Scottish nickname for people called Stuart.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is Sunday, January 7, 2024, between worship services.

Here is the status of our 2024 Pledge Campaign:

Campaign target: \$1,700,000

Pledges received to Date: \$1,367,367

% of target achieved: 80.4%

Number of Pledges Received: 388

Number of Families who have not yet pledged: 662

% change in pledges from 2023 for those who pledged both years: 8.5%

Number of new pledges: 45

If you have pledged – thank you.

If you haven't, please do as soon as possible.

You can pledge by turning in a pledge card, pledging through the Realm App, or calling the church office. Please pray for us to have a successful campaign.

**MAKE
LOVE
YOUR
GOAL**

1 Corinthians 14:1



We envision a world where every heart experiences God's transforming love.



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