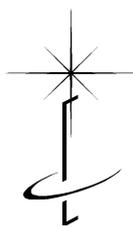


Mulberry Street United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 24, 2017

Five O'clock



Music of the Season

Beginning at 4:30

Betsy Fitzgerald, Harp

Greg Elliott, Baritone

Beau Palmer, Tenor

Candlelight Communion Service

Greeting

Rev. Jimmy Towson

Opening Prayer

Pam Johnston

God of Surprising Love and Hope,
we come this evening to the manger,
gazing lovingly on the Child born
to bring hope to the world.

Open our hearts tonight as we hear the story anew.
Help us to be guided by the Light of Jesus Christ,
that we may truly feel the power
of your love and bring that love,
with joy, to all we meet.

In Jesus' Name, we pray. **Amen.**

* Congregational Carol No. 240

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

MENDELSSOHN

Lighting the Christ Candle

Emory, Mary Charles, George and Thomas Dunn

Rejoice, people of God! The light has come into the world.

O God, now we light the candle of your nativity!

With the company of heaven and with sounds of great joy,
you come to us.

This is the time of light and resplendent joy.

God has been born among us.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed a time
when those who walked in the shadows
would see a great light.

A light would shine and a child would be born to us.

The evangelist Luke painted the nativity sky
and repeated the heavenly song of the angels,
“Glory, peace on earth and goodwill!”
John declared that this great light is Christ,
the Word made flesh.
This great light lives among us.
By it we behold God’s glory – full of grace and truth.
At Christ’s nativity, we now rejoice.

**God our Life and Light,
thank you for coming this night to us.
Thanks for touching all heaven and earth
with your splendor.
In every corner of the world,
shine with your peace.
In every corner of our hearts,
shine this night with your grace. Amen.**

Congregational Carol No. 229

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

W ZLOBIE LEZY

Proclamation and Response

* Gospel Lesson

Pam Johnston

Luke 2:1-20 (ESV)

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Homily

Rev. Jimmy Towson

The Wonder of Christmas: “The Wonder of Presence”

Offering of our Gifts

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

Richard Kosowski (2017)

*Beau Palmer, Tenor
Rich Kosowski, Tenor
Greg Elliott, Baritone
John Inzetta, Clarinet*

Thanksgiving and Communion

Invitation to the Table

Rev. Jeff Cook

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin
and seek to live in peace with one another.
Come, let us break bread together.

Confession and Pardon

Prepare our hearts, O God,
to receive the Christ Child once more.
Let us pray together.

When we allow darkness to overcome the light,
Forgive us, Lord.

When we reduce Christmas to plastic and tinsel,
have mercy on us, Father.

When hardness of heart keeps us from seeing
and hearing and touching the needs of others,
let your grace consume us, O God.

When the wars around us are of no concern,
**forgive us, Lord, and move us to compassion
for those who suffer.**

When our caring is not extended to action,
**move us to seek justice
for our brothers and sisters.**

**We come to confess our sinfulness before you
and before each other.
Remove all barriers that divide us,
and let there be no obstacle to our love for you
and for one another. Amen.**

Silent Confession

People of God,
through the coming of Jesus Christ,
whose birth we celebrate,
the Lord has comforted and redeemed us!
Recall the words of the angels:
Good news...Great joy...All people...
In Christ we receive the salvation of our God.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
Glory to God in the highest!**

Sung Communion A (Pages 17-18)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
Christ has died. Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.
Amen. Amen. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Rev. Jimmy Towson

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass 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.**

Breaking the Bread

Giving of the Bread and Cup

*Communion will be served by intinction.
After receiving communion,
you are welcome to go to the altar for prayer.
Please let an usher know
if you need to be served in your pew.
Gluten-free bread and juice are available
on the chancel steps pulpit side.*

* Candlelight Carol

"Night of Silence" Dan Cantor/John Ferguson
*The congregation is invited
to join in singing as directed.*

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm,
all is bright round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star,
lend thy light, with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King; Christ the savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!**

* Benediction

Rev. Jimmy Towson

Please return candles to baskets at each exit of the sanctuary.

Assisting in Worship

Rev. Jimmy Towson, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jeff Cook, Associate Pastor

Pam Johnston, Director of Children & Family Ministries

Pat Crowe, Organist

Richard Kosowski, Director of Music

Bill & Cindy Jarrard, Lay Communion Servers

Freeda Chapman, Carol Pope & Louise Watson, Bread Bakers

Alex Stone, Lead Acolyte

Micah Johnston, Crucifer & Communion Steward

Cooper Baskette & Olivia Mann,

Candlelighters & Communion Ushers

Chace Crowell, Graham Johnston, Ella Magda & Emerson Toles,

Communion Assistants & Pew Candlelighters

Scripture

Luke 2:1-20 (ESV)

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

About this service...

*We're glad you are worshipping with us this Christmas Eve
and hope that the following notes will be helpful
as you experience our candlelight communion service.*

Receiving Communion

*An acolyte will assist you in knowing when it is time
for those on your pew to be served.*

*As you move through the serving line,
you will be given a piece of bread by a minister.*

*Hold the bread, step to the cup,
and then dip it into the cup before eating.*

*Please use the center aisle when going to receive communion,
and the side aisles when returning to your seat.*

*After receiving the elements,
you may return directly to your pew
or you may go to the altar for prayer.*

*After everyone has been served,
the ministers will take the elements
to those who are unable to come forward.
Please tell an usher if you need assistance.*

Offerings

*There are two opportunities this evening
to offer monetary gifts to the church.*

*Money given as the plates are passed
goes to the general church budget.*

*The offering given during communion
is designated for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund
which provides assistance to people in need
in our church and community.*

*Those who wish to contribute
may leave their offering at the altar rail
or in the offering plates located in the side aisles.*

Candles

*An acolyte will distribute candles for the candle lighting ceremony
as you return to your pew after communion.*

*Please place your candles in the baskets
as you leave the church.*