

Eastminster Presbyterian Church
SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
First Sunday after Christmas

December 27, 2020

GREETING

Praise the Christ-child, the newborn Prince of Peace! We have been redeemed. We are no longer afraid. Praise to the God who has come to us in the flesh! We are being created. We are no longer afraid. Praise to the Spirit who calls us together to serve! We will be sustained. We are no longer afraid.

*This day my heart is overflowing with gratitude! I thank God for the gift of peace and salvation we have been given in the Christ-child and for all the ways the world has chosen to show God's love in a year that has tried to bring dark to the forefront, but as we have been promised...the dark did NOT overcome the Light!

*I am grateful for the time with my family and time with my church family and friends on Christmas Eve, whether that was via social media or gathered in front of the sanctuary steps. It was a simple service that the Spirit of the Lord made beautiful.

*I am grateful for the time gifted me as Fred is preaching today, sharing yet another gift among all of the gifts he has been sharing these many months!

*I am grateful for all of the prayers that have been lifted throughout these last months, both those of thanksgiving and petition. Thank you for being a congregation that takes prayer seriously. For the prayers that have been answered in God's way and time, thank you, Lord. For those who are still in need of prayer, we continue to lift them up, and especially this morning, we ask God's healing hand upon Sylvia and Tom Falcon as Sylvia has suffered a setback. May the strength and healing of the Lord be upon them. For all the prayers of your hearts, we lift them now!

Come, let us worship God!

OPEN PRAYER

All-knowing God, we join our voices together with praise and thanksgiving for who you are, and for all that you have done for us. You know us better than we know ourselves—all our thoughts and actions—and yet you love us. No matter where we go or what we do, your love encircles us—ahead and behind—gently leading and guiding and blessing. We praise you for your love and your faithful presence in our lives. May your Spirit move in our hearts and minds as we worship together—examine our attitudes and actions, lay bare the things we need to confess, challenge us with Your Word, and guide us on to paths that lead to life. For we are your people, called by your name.

Amen.

VOLUNTARY

Beautiful Savior
Melody Davis

Arr. Cherwin

OPENING CAROL 132 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

CALL TO CONFESSION

God's promise to us is eternal. God wishes to bless us with hope, with joy, with life. But our desires lead us to reject God and these blessings. Let us confess how we too often choose the path of tears, rather than the joy which can lead us to God's heart.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we try not to do evil, but it is so hard to let go of the little things that bring us pleasure, but no glory to you. Forgive us. You have given us salvation, and we act as if we were the ones who paid for it. Help us to rejoice always in your grace, and to give thanks in every moment for the life we have received through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Go! And take God's Good News to others: to those held captive by sin, to those cradling broken hearts, to those grieving lost relationships. God forgives us all and makes us new. **May we rejoice and tell all we meet: God has done great things for us, and wants to do the same for you! Thanks be to God. Amen.**

RESPONSE 113 *Angels We Have Heard on High* (refrain only)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, as we come into your Word, we pray that you will open our hearts to what we need to hear. Wherever we are in our journey with you, whatever we are carrying in our hearts, there is something, Lord, that we believe you can speak to us and so we pray that you do that. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 692)

Isaiah 61: 10-62:3

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. ⁶²For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. ²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

EPISTLE READING (*Pew Bible*, page 189)

Galatians 4: 4-7

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

ANTHEM

Mary’s Little Boy Child Jester Hairston Arr. R. Akin and F. Watkins
Sanctuary Choir and Instruments

NEW TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 59)

Luke 2: 22-40

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” ³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

SERMON CAROL 110 *Love Has Come*

SERMON

If You Ain’t Got Joy, Get it!

Fred Watkins

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth 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 Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray to God, saying: Gracious God, **bind us together in perfect harmony.** As we gather in the waning hours of 2020, hear us as we gather in your name to pray for those concerns on our hearts this day. Gracious God **bind us together in perfect harmony.** We pray for those who are traveling to visit their families during this Christmas break. Keep safe those who travel on the roads and in the air. Give the students and school workers among us the rest they need before they begin a new semester next week. Be with those who are journeying through the holidays for the first time without a loved one who was lost this past year. Gracious God **bind us together in perfect harmony.** As we turn to a new year, we pray that our nation might learn from the violence and division we have experienced far too often in the year past. May 2021 be a year of kindness, compassion, and, above all, justice. Gracious God **bind us together in perfect harmony.** We pray for the politicians who have been elected and will start their terms in the new year.

May they conduct their work with humility, honor, decency, and righteousness. Gracious God **bind us together in perfect harmony.** We pray for this congregation. Help us as we begin a new year Lead us onward with intelligence, imagination, enthusiasm, love Gracious God **bind us together in perfect harmony.** We pray for those on our hearts this day whom we lift up to you in silence... Gracious God **bind us together in perfect harmony.** Hear us now, Mighty Counselor, as we pray the prayer you 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**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

God blesses us with gifts so that we might do great things with them-- feed the hungry, comfort the homeless, lift up the fallen, speak hope to those with little or no hope. Bless these gifts, bless our lives, as we seek to take the good news into our world. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

