



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP *with UCC Westerly*

December 6, 2020 @ 9:45am*
Broadcast live from our sanctuary

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Gathering Music – “Lord of the Light”

[WORDS & MUSIC: Doug Brummund, ©2020 B.R. Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission.]

PASTOR’S WELCOME

Prelude – “Trumpet Tune on ‘Wachet Auf’”

[MUSIC: Martha Sobaje, ©2005, Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc., All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE#A-734569]

DEACON’S GREETING

INVITATION TO WORSHIP – *The Lighting of the Advent Wreath Candle of Peace*

[<https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog/advent-candle-lighting-litanies>]

Reader One: Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in Jerusalem, we light a candle of peace...

Reader Two: Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace ... (*Light a second unlit purple candle*)

Reader One: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

Reader Two: May the light from this candle say to all that God’s peace is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

Both: Friends, be not afraid, God’s peace is at hand!

OPENING SONG – “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

[WORDS: Edmund H. Sears & MUSIC: Richard Storrs Willis, ©Public Domain]

- 1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,” from heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*
- 2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.*
- 3. And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!*
- 4. For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,*

*When with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.*

UNISON PRAYER OF REFLECTION

[adapted from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 8]

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. Once again we come to this time of Advent and await your presence. Give us the patience to seek the meaning of these busy days. Give us the courage to wait in times of trouble, pain and confusion. Give us the compassion to care for each other. Give us the faith to wait for the Messiah when we are threatened by the Herods of this world. Give us the hope to wait for the Savior even when we cannot hear the angels singing. Give us the love that does not hesitate when it meets Christ in our neighbor. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

STATEMENT OF FAITH -- [from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 212]

In faith we acknowledge that God has acted in the past, in a holy history.

In faith, we confess that God seeks to be present our lives each day.

In faith, we affirm that God continues to send prophets and speak through willing vessels to guide the course of all history toward its end.

In faith we imagine that end to be characterized by the traits we find in Jesus Christ: compassion, justice and love.

In faith we long to be part of that purpose made alive in Jesus. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN -- "Let Us Break Bread Together"

[CONTRIBUTORS: William Farley Smith; TUNE: United Methodist Publishing House/Abingdon Press. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE#A-734569 – as to both verses]

V. 1 -- *Let us break bread together on our knees (2 X)*

When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

WORDS OF INVITATION AND PRAYER

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world as your rainbow of hope in an uncertain world. Send us in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN – "Let Us Break Bread Together"

V. 3 -- *Let us praise God together on our knees (2 X)*

When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:67-79

Morning Message

"... with Peaceful Wings Unfurled"

Rev. Ruth

Musical Meditation – "Sing We Now of Christmas"

[© Public Domain]

A TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayer & Silent Prayers

The Lord's Prayer in whatever words are most comfortable for you.

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Anthem by the Tone Chimes Choir – “In the Bleak Midwinter”

[MUSIC: Gustav Holst, © Public Domain]

*Doxology “Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.”

[©Public Domain]

CLOSING SONG -- “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

[[WORDS & MUSIC: Sy Miller & Jill Jackson. ©1955 Jan-Lee Music. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE#A-734569]

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God our Creator, children all are we.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.

With every step I take let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION

[adapted from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 243]

God sends you forth from the church, gathered and scattered as we are in these Covid days, to be ambassadors for Christ. God looks for anyone who will lift instead of lean, help instead of hinder. Go to claim a corner of the world for God and may God’s Spirit go with you and abide with you, this day and forevermore. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Postlude – “Contemplation”

[MUSIC: Rob Roy Peery based on a melody by John Stainer, ©1950 & 1965, Lorenz Publishing Company]

Points for Reflection

Welcome to my Advent Sermon Series on hymns and how they inform and deepen our faith and understanding of Christmas. Each week you are invited to read through the week’s focus scripture and reflect on some questions to guide your thoughts on the text, and to consider how the biblical text connects with the hymn’s verses.

This week’s text: Luke 1:67-79

- This text appears in Luke’s long preamble to the Nativity story which includes the annunciation to Mary shortly before these verses. It is not immediately evident who these verses are about. Go back and begin reading at verse 57 to figure out who Luke is talking about here. Hint: It’s not Jesus!
- This story is important to understanding more of the context from which Jesus came. If you read this text carefully, you will see that it is a description of Jesus

and the one who will prepare the way for him. Why do you suppose we seldom read this text during Advent? What do you find meaningful in it?

- What does this text say about peace? What is the connection between light and peace and God?
- Which line of the hymn do you think captures the essence of this biblical text?

If you would like a copy of my sermon for this week, kindly contact me or Carol in the office and we will send you a copy with next week's Weekly Update.

Luke 1:67-79

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who
hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.’