

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 23, 2018

10:30 AM

*We welcome you to worship today. It is a privilege to have you as our guest.
As you enter the sanctuary, begin to worship quietly with personal prayer.
Please turn off your cell phone and turn your thoughts toward God.*

We prepare for worship

Take a moment and meditate on this as you prepare for worship...

O Lord, who has given us cause for perpetual joy by the coming of Your Son our Savior among us; Raise up Your power, we pray, and possess us with a mighty sense of Your wonderful love; that whereas through the cares of this life we are sorely impeded and hindered in running the race that is set before us, we may be anxious for nothing, but thankfully commending ourselves in everything to Your bountiful grace and mercy, the peace of You our God which passes all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds; through the satisfaction of Your Son our Lord to whom with You and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Sunday before Christmas, The Book of Common Prayer

Prelude

Glory to God in the Highest

G. B. Pergolesi
Gloria Hague, Organ
Grace Liu, Piano

We praise our great God

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of God's unending love and faithfulness.

The shepherds were the first to hear the joyful announcement of Christ's birth—the "good news of great joy for all the people" (Lk 2:10).

Upon seeing the baby Jesus, the shepherds "spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed" (Lk 2:18).

We have also heard this wonderful news. We "welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1:6).

"Though you have not seen Jesus, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him" (1 Pe 1:8).

And we "are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Pe 1:8). We light this candle as a symbol of the peace which Jesus has brought us through his incarnation.

*Hymn No. 203

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.

*Invocation

We embrace Christ our Savior

Psalter Reading (responsive)

Psalm 148

(Hymnal pg. 840)

Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above.

Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.

He set them in place for ever and ever;

he gave a decree that will never pass away.

Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,

you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,

wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,

kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,

young men and maidens, old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;

His splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart.

Praise the LORD.

Assurance of Pardon (responsive)

Micah 5:2, 4, 5a (ESV)

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

And he shall be their peace.

*Confession of Faith (unison)

Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 38

Why was it [necessary] that the Mediator should be God? **It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that He might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death;¹ give worth and efficacy to His sufferings, obedience, and intercession;² and to satisfy God's justice,³ procure His favor,⁴ purchase a peculiar people,⁵ give His Spirit to them,⁶ conquer all their enemies,⁷ and bring them to everlasting salvation.⁸**

¹ Acts 2:24, 25; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; Heb. 9:14 ² Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:14; 7:25-28

³ Rom. 3:24-26 ⁴ Eph. 1:6; Matt. 3:17 ⁵ Titus 2:13, 14 ⁶ Gal. 4:6

⁷ Lk. 1:68-69, 71, 74 ⁸ Heb. 5:8, 9; 9:11-15

*Hymn No. 207

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

In Dulci Jubilo

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Earth and heav'n before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door, and man is blessed evermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Old Testament Reading

Judges 5:24- (ESV)

- ²⁴ “Most blessed of women be Jael,
 the wife of Heber the Kenite,
 of tent-dwelling women most blessed.
²⁵ He asked for water and she gave him milk;
 she brought him curds in a noble's bowl.
²⁶ She sent her hand to the tent peg
 and her right hand to the workmen's mallet;
 she struck Sisera;
 she crushed his head;
 she shattered and pierced his temple.
²⁷ Between her feet
 he sank, he fell, he lay still;
 between her feet
 he sank, he fell;
 where he sank,
 there he fell—dead.
²⁸ “Out of the window she peered,
 the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice:
 ‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?
 Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?’
²⁹ Her wisest princesses answer,
 indeed, she answers herself,
³⁰ ‘Have they not found and divided the spoil?—
 A womb or two for every man;
 spoil of dyed materials for Sisera,
 spoil of dyed materials embroidered,
 two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as spoil?’
³¹ “So may all your enemies perish, O LORD!
 But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might.”

And the land had rest for forty years.

Aisquith Life and Opportunities

The Prayers of God's People and the Lord's Prayer (in unison)

We respond in gratitude for God's blessing

**The Doxology (Hymnal, pg. 731)* and Prayer of Dedication

God's Tithes and Our Offerings

The Offertory

When Love Came Down

Stuart Townend
 The Adult Choir

When love came down to death and made his home with men, the hopeless found a hope, the sinner found a friend. Not to the powerful but to the poor he came. And humble hungry hearts were satisfied again. **O what joy, oh, what peace. Peace has come to us! Hope, help, what love!** When every unclean thought, and every sinful deed was scourged upon his back and hammered through his feet. The innocent is cursed, the guilty are released, the punishment of God on God has brought me peace...Come lay your heavy load down at the Master's feet; your shame will be

removed. Your joy will be complete. Come crucify your pride, and enter as a child; for those who bow down low he'll lift up to his side. What joy, what peace has come to us! What hope, what help, what love! Oh, what joy, oh, what peace. Peace has come, has come to us! What hope, what joy, what love. What love!

The children may dismiss for church-time programs.

We hear God speak

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:1-20

(Pew Bible, pg. 724)

The Birth of Jesus Christ

2 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.

The Shepherds and the Angels

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.

Sermon

"The Angels' Song"

Pastor Bell

We respond to God's grace

*Hymn No. 201

O Little Town of Bethlehem

St. Louis

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
 No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
 No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

*Benediction and Three-Fold *Amen* (*Hymnal*, pg. 740)

Postlude

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

Danish
 Traditional English

 *Those who are able, please stand.

Christmas Card box is on the narthex table.

The Offering envelopes for 2019 are also on the narthex table.

On Christmas Eve the Baltimore Brass will give a concert beginning at 6:30 PM and will participate in the music that evening.

The Tuesday evening Women's Bible Study will start a new book study, John McArthur's Colossians & Philemon, on January 8, 2019. If you are interested in joining us for this study, contact Janet Johnson (410-666-5814) so that she can order the book for you.

This Week at Aisquith

TODAY	10:30 AM	Worship
MONDAY	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service
SUNDAY	10:30 AM	Worship