

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020 at 10:30 AM

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

We prepare for worship

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

Almighty God, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen!

The Book of Common Prayer (1789)

Prelude

Mrs. Wendy Wickham

Aisquith Life and Opportunities

We praise our great God

Call to Worship

Today we light *the candle of peace*, knowing that Jesus alone can make us feel at rest and calm in our hearts. We remember that in Philippians Paul wrote, “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*”

Dear God, give us the gift of Jesus and the Spirit so that our hearts can be calm and peaceful. Help us to know how close you are to us all the time, and help us to show you and your peace to other people too. Amen.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light this candle as a symbol of the peace that Jesus has given us; a peace that passes all understanding.

Hymn No. 208

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him born the King of angels:

***O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.***

God of God, Light of Light;
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb:
very God, begotten, not created;

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of hea'v above;
glory to God in the highest;

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning:
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, late in flesh appearing;

Invocation

We embrace Christ our Savior

Confession of Sin (**unison**)

Almighty God, we bow before you and before your Son, our Savior, Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We rejoice in the light that he has brought into the world—into our own hearts—and we carry on the song that the angels sang as they announced his birth: “Glory to God in the highest!” But as we lift our voices in praise, we also bow our hearts in confession. It was for our sin that Jesus came. God, the Son, emptied himself of his divine privileges and took upon himself our humanity. He delivered us from the bondage of sin and gave us new hope. It is God with us—Emmanuel—who makes us what he would have us to be. The joyous announcement that we now bring to the world is that proclamation that God and sinners have been reconciled; the Prince of Peace has come! We lift our hearts! We lift up our voices! We rejoice because Jesus is our Lord and King! Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Isaiah 12:1, 2 (ESV)

In that day I will say: I praise you, O Lord. Although you were angry with me, your anger turned away and you have comforted me. Surely, O God, you are my salvation; I will trust you and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.

Confession of Faith (**unison**)

Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 37

How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

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.

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

Special Music

O Holy Night!

Jon Carlos Ley, soloist
Christopher Lottes, accompanist

We hear God speak

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 7:1-14 (ESV)

⁷ In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. ² When the house of David was told, "Syria is in league with Ephraim," the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. ³ And the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field. ⁴ And say to him, 'Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah. ⁵ Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, ⁶ "Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it," ⁷ thus says the Lord GOD:

"It shall not stand,
and it shall not come to pass.
⁸ For the head of Syria is Damascus,
and the head of Damascus is Rezin.
And within sixty-five years
Ephraim will be shattered from being a people.
⁹ And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.
If you are not firm in faith,
you will not be firm at all."

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings

you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷ The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

Sermon

“The Triumph of Grace over an Unbelieving Cause”

Pastor Bell

We respond to God's grace

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.

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

Danish

Postlude

We Welcome and Thank Mrs. Wendy Wickham, JonCarlos Ley and Christopher Lottes for providing the music today.

Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 7:00 PM. It will be somewhat different this year because of the health concern restrictions. There will be no choir, but we will be singing carols. We will not have a story for the children or the lighting of candles to conclude the service. Although this will certainly disappoint some, we need to be careful to protect one another.

The Maryland State Boychoir will NOT be holding their Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, they are producing a recording drawn from past years which will be broadcast on WBJC 91.5 on Wednesday, December 23rd. It will also be available for purchase as a CD.

This is what to do if there is fresh snow or ice when you wake up on a Sunday morning. The decision on whether to have church will be made by 8 AM. Cancellation announcements will be posted on the church answering machine and on our website (www.aisquith.org). We will also send out an email blast to those of you who are on the list. In addition, you may call one of the pastors or elders. Our decision will be

based primarily on road conditions and the availability of parking. Don't assume, check! If you have any questions please speak to one of the elders.