

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2012
9:30 and 11:00 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, raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us, and with great might succor us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, world without end. Amen. The Book of Common Prayer

Prelude

Long Ago and Far Away

German carol
Gwen Griffith, mezzo soprano
Casey Burnett, trumpet
Mrs. Gloria Hague, Director of Music, organ

Soli Deo Gloria

Praetorius
Anne Leininger, alto
Andrew Oswinkle, tenor

We praise our great God

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

The whole earth is full of his glory!

When Christ was born, the glory of the Lord shone around the shepherds and they were terrified. But the angel said to them: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy.

We light this candle in celebration of our glorious God who sent his precious Son, revealing his glory as never before.

*Hymn No. 218

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

Regent Square

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the new born King.

Shepherds in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing, yonder shines the infant Light:

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star:

Saints below the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son;
evermore your voices raising to th'eternal Three in One:

*Invocation

We embrace Christ our Savior

Psalter Reading (responsive)

Psalm 80

(*Hymnal*, pg. 813)

Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock;
you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Awaken your might; come and save us.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

O LORD God Almighty, how long will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people?

You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.

You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us.

Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.

The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.

It sent out its boughs to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River.

Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it.

Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see!

Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself.

Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke your people perish.

Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself.

Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, O LORD God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

**The Gloria Patri*

(*Hymnal*, pg. 735)

*Assurance of Grace

Hebrews 2:14-18

Since the children have flesh and blood, [Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God,

and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

*Hymn No. 197 *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

Thirsting

Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace thus saith our God;
 Comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
 Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
 Tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over.

Yea, her sins our God will pardon, blotting out each dark misdeed;
 All that well deserved his anger he no more will see or heed.
 She hath suffered many a day, now her griefs have passed away;
 God will change her pining sadness into ever springing gladness.

For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,
 Bidding all men to repentance, since the kingdom now is here.
 O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away;

Let the valleys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him.

Make ye straight what long was crooked, make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign,
For the glory of the Lord now o'er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token, that his word is never broken.

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

Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming

Vulpus

Lo, how a rose ever blooming From tender root hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming As men of old have sung.
It came a flow'ret bright. Amid the cold of winter When half spent was the night!

We hear God speak

Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 11, 12

(Pew Bible pg. 221)

Sermon

"The Triumph of Faith over a Floundering Purpose"

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

***Please remain standing in your pew until the postlude is finished.**

Postlude

Hallelujah Chorus

Handel

*Those who are able, please stand.

The flowers were given in honor of Alan Henningson's birthday by his family.

We welcome Gwen Griffith as our soloist today. Gwen lives in Philadelphia and followed Gloria as conductor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church children's choir.

The College & Career Christmas Dinner Party will be Sunday, December 30th at 6:00 PM at John & Julie Ceselsky's house. RSVP today!

Our Christmas offering this year goes to the PCA's Ministerial Relief Fund. Your gifts make possible our denomination's help for the widows and children of men who have faithfully served Christ's Church. The Fund also assists retired ministers and missionaries who are in financial need. Please give generously.

LAST CHANCE! The Maryland State Boychoir has its last presentation of Lessons and Carols today at 4 PM.

Last week's cookie walk raised \$409 for next summer's Impact Trip.