

Service of Holy Communion

January 3, 2021 2nd Christmas

WELCOME

PRELUDE

O Come Little Children - arranged by Anna Laura Page - SKLC Bells
Gesu Bambino - arranged by Rick Walters - Trumpet solo - Pastor Kris Hill

GATHERING SONG #267 Joy to the World, verses 1 and 4

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE - #275 Angels From the Realms of Glory, verses 1-3

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,

God with us is now residing,
 yonder shines the infant light.
 Come and worship, come and worship,
 worship Christ, the newborn king.

- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
 brighter visions beam afar;
 seek the great desire of nations,
 you have seen his natal star.
 Come and worship, come and worship,
 worship Christ, the newborn king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, **you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

THE WORD

FIRST READING: *Jeremiah 31:7-14*

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
 and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
 proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people,
 the remnant of Israel."

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
 and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
 among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a
 great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
 and with consolations I will lead them back,
 I will let them walk by brooks of water,
 in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
 for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
 and declare it in the coastlands far away;
 say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
 and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,

and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
 and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
 over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
 and over the young of the flock and the herd;
 their life shall become like a watered garden,
 and they shall never languish again.
¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
 and the young men and the old shall be merry.
 I will turn their mourning into joy,
 I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
 and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.
 The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

CAROL #272 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming, verses 1 and 2

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
 from tender stem hath sprung!
 Of Jesse's lineage coming
 as seers of old have sung,
 it came, a flow'r so bright,
 amid the cold of winter,
 when half-spent was the night.

- 2 Isaiah had foretold it,
 the rose I have in mind;
 with Mary we behold it,
 the virgin mother kind.
 To show God's love aright,
 she bore to us a Savior,
 when half-spent was the night.

HOMILY Jesus in the Shopping Mall: A Christmas Story, by Ed Williams, originally published in the *Charlotte Observer*, December 21, 1997.

On the second Sunday of Christmas, I like to read a Christmas story. I have several that I've cut out of magazines or copied off the internet, but I don't think I've used this one before. I read it in the newspaper, *The Charlotte Observer*, when I was living in North Carolina. It was written by Ed Williams, who was an editor with the *Observer*. Mr. Williams writes...

"I want to tell you a story of the Christmas season, but it needs a preface. So first, a few words about religion and me. I don't see angels in the clouds or hear God speaking in the ocean's roar or the gurgle of the Mr. Coffee machine. I claim no special religious understanding or theological insight. Some see themselves as instruments of God's indignation about modern life, and devote a good deal of time to separating the sheep from the goats. But I see myself simply as a beneficiary of God's grace.

"I grew up with the certainties of the fundamentalist Baptist faith. As my list of questions grew to rival my list of answers, I experienced my share of internal tensions between belief and doubt. I am comforted by the knowledge that others also engage in that struggle.

"In my younger days I focused on the uncertainties. As I age, I find myself more comfortable with the mystery, and I find in myself an inclination simply to trust. I bring this up, as I said, because I want to tell you a Christmas story.

"Last year in the weeks before Christmas I was attending an editors meeting in Miami. I had forgotten how warm Miami can be in December, and had packed only long-sleeved shirts. The downtown hotel where we met is connected to a shopping mall, so I strolled over the first evening to buy cooler clothing.

"I went into J. C. Penney. The means-wear area opened directly onto the large hallway near the escalators. As I looked at shirts I could feel the throng of shoppers bustling nearby.

"I looked up to see a young man emerge from the crowd and zero in on me. I sensed he intended to ask for something. I braced myself for his pitch. But his question took me by surprise: 'Do you believe in Jesus?'

"I looked him over. He was a thin, pleasant-looking man in his mid-30s, but his hair was tousled and he needed a shave. He had on a rumpled shirt, worn jeans and loafers with no socks. And he had large sores, visible on his arms and neck, the telltale lesions – Kaposi's sarcoma, I'm told they're called – associated with AIDS.

"'Why do you ask?' I said.

"He told me his story. He had come to Miami years ago from a nearby town. When he was diagnosed with HIV, his family told him not to come home. Over time his condition had developed into AIDS.

"A few days earlier, he said, his family had called. For some reason they had a change of heart. They invited him home for Christmas. He couldn't tell them, he said, that he was broke. He needed money for bus fare. Ten dollars would get him home for Christmas.

“I’m in a Wednesday morning Bible study class at Myers Park Baptist Church. Not long before my Miami trip we had discussed the passage in Matthew where Jesus speaks to those who are to inherit the kingdom and reminds them of how they had helped him when he was down and out.

“They ask, when did we do this? He responds, in the compelling language of the King James Version, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’

“There’s a problem with knowing these Bible stories: They keep calling you to account. This one is particularly troubling for prosperous people who usually manage to ignore the poverty around us.

“People like me.”

“In my pocket I had a \$20 bill that I intended to spend on a shirt. I didn’t know whether to believe him. It didn’t matter. He obviously needed the money more than I did.

“I handed him the money. ‘Here,’ I said. ‘Merry Christmas.’

“He was surprised. Apparently he hadn’t expected it to be so easy. He took the money and looked straight into my eyes. ‘Thank you,’ he said, and it was as heart-felt a thanks as I have ever received. Then he put the money in his pocket and walked away.

“Just before he melded into the crowd, he turned and raised his hand in a farewell salute. And he said, ‘I think *you* are Jesus.’

“I was stunned. Before I could respond, he vanished into the crowd of shoppers. What I would have said to him was, ‘I thought *you* were Jesus.’”

And the Word became flesh, today’s gospel reading tells us. “The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.” The Word continues to take on flesh in every generation, to reveal again the glory of the Father – in a newborn child, or a stranger with AIDS, or someone who gives to you as Jesus would. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel comes to you, wherever and however you are, comes to us with comfort today and hope for tomorrow.

HYMN OF THE DAY #277 Away in a Manger, all three verses

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

THE NICENE CREED

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

We believe in one God,

**the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

**the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to your gathered children as we pray...

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 praise him, all creatures here below;
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (setting 1)

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS IN CHRISTMAS

It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,
 that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,
 al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.
 You comforted your people with the promise of the Re - deem - er,
 through whom you will also make all things new
 in the day when he comes to judge the world in righ - teous-ness.
 And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,
 with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,
 we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
 pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
 san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

God who, in the beginning, made order out of chaos bringing forth creation; who blessed Abraham and Sarah with a child, who led Israel from slavery into freedom, who through the prophets foretold the coming of a suffering servant, and who made Mary mother of a Son to be called Emmanuel – God, most high, who has redeemed us through Jesus Christ, our Lord – we remember...

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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 trespasses,
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The Word is revealed in a manger, in simple bread and wine. Come meet Christ in this meal.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. *(please consume the bread)*

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. *(please drink from the cup)*

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shepherd King will have its annual congregational meeting on Sunday, January 17, immediately following worship (11:00 am). Members will vote on council representatives, a budget for 2021, an updated constitution, and will receive the yearend report. You can participate on Facebook livestream or Zoom (or by calling someone who is livestreaming the service and listening in on their device over the phone).

BLESSING

Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ✠ through the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN #290 Go, Tell It On the Mountain all verses*Refrain*

Go tell it on the mountain,
 over the hills and ev'rywhere;
 go tell it on the mountain
 that Jesus Christ is born!

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching
 o'er silent flocks by night,
 behold, throughout the heavens
 there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled
 when, lo, above the earth
 rang out the angel chorus
 that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

- 3 Down in a lonely manger
 the humble Christ was born;
 and God sent us salvation
 that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

#297 Jesus, What a Wonderful Child

One Voice

CHIMES

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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