

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Lighting the Third Advent Candle

A prophet tells us how God comes—
through someone who receives God's spirit,
and through a community that hears the good news:

The Spirit of the Living God is upon me
because God has anointed me . . .
to announce good news to the humble,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to captives,
and release to those in prison, . . .
to comfort all who mourn,
to give them garlands instead of ashes,
oil of gladness instead of mourners' tears.

(Isa. 61:1–3 REB)

We light our third candle,
as a sign of hope
that the Spirit of God may anoint us
to show God's liberating love.

**Living God, proclaim liberty to captives.
Set us free, that we may free others.
Bind our wounds, that we may heal others.
Fill us with your Spirit,
and anoint us with your love.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Immanuel:
All: God with us.
One: Incarnation:
All: God in the flesh.
One: Into this world...
All: ...God comes, with us, in us, for us.
One: Come, let us worship the God who comes.

***OPENING HYMN** “What Child Is This” GtG 145

One: What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?

**All: This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!**

One: Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?

**All: Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.**

One: Nails, spear, shall pierce him through;
the cross be borne for me, for you.

**All: Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!**

One: So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;

All: come, one and all, to own him.

One: The King of kings salvation brings;

All: let loving hearts enthrone him.

One: Raise, raise the song on high.
The virgin sings her lullaby.

**All: Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!**

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***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Merciful God, you come to us in the joy of new birth;
why, then, do we fail to see you and fail to heed your call?**

**You demonstrate that you love justice;
why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing
and every form of evil?**

**You have given us the gift of your Spirit;
why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us?**

**You have given us the words of the prophets
and the Word himself;**

**why, then, do we despise and ignore
what we have heard from you?**

**You have sent the light into the world;
why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light?**

Forgive us. Restore us.

**Till and tend us as your garden
until righteousness and praise spring up,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

***SILENT CONFESSION**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON** *(from Matthew 1 & Luke 2)*

One: The One who comes in the Child of Bethlehem is the One who comes to redeem and restore.

All: His name is Jesus, “for he will save his people from their sins.”

One: This is indeed “good news of great joy for all the people.”

**All: So let us rejoice and be glad, for in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!
Alleluia! Amen!**

***THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11
Psalm 126
Luke 1:47-55

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON by Pastor Bill Vincent

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.**

**Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.**

(from *A Brief Statement of Faith*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Restore us, O God,...
People: ...and do great things among us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Traditional)*

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

OFFERING

Invitation

Reflection

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

**Gracious God,
teach us to give thanks in all things,
for you are always with us.
Thank you for the privilege
of sharing what we have with others,
of giving ourselves away in love,
and of receiving the gifts that others share with us.
With our whole being,
spirit and soul and body,
we rejoice in you even as we give ourselves to you.
Mold us and use us as instruments of your will,
that all we do may be in accord
with the gospel of the Child who comes.
In his name we pray. Amen.**

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” GtG 146

One: Gentle Mary laid her child
lowly in a manger;

**All: there he lay, the undefiled,
to the world a stranger.**

One: Such a babe in such a place,
can he be the Savior?

**All: Ask the saved of all the race
who have found his favor.**

One: Angels sang about his birth;

All: wise men sought and found him;

One: heaven's star shone brightly forth,
glory all around him.

**All: Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,
heard the angels singing;**

One: all the plains were lit that night;

All: all the hills were ringing.

One: Gentle Mary laid her child
lowly in a manger;
he is still the undefiled,
but no more a stranger.

**All: Son of God, of humble birth,
beautiful the story;
praise his name in all the earth;
hail the King of glory!**

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Pastor: ...And let the gathered people of God say...

People: ...Amen.

POSTLUDE

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