

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP *(from Psalm 103)*

One: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all God's benefits --"
All: **"who forgives all your iniquity,"**
One: "who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy."
All: **Our spirits rejoice in the coming of God our Savior.**
One: God's mercy extends from generation to generation.
All: **So come, let us worship the Lord our God!**

***OPENING HYMN** "Blest Be the God of Israel" GtG 109

One: Blest be the God of Israel,
All: **who comes to set us free;**
 who visits and redeems us,
 who grants us liberty.
One: The prophets spoke of mercy,
 of freedom and release;
All: **God shall fulfill that promise**
 and bring the people peace.

One: God from the house of David
 a child of grace has given;
All: **a Savior comes among us**
 to raise us up to heaven.
One: Before him goes the herald,
 forerunner in the way,
All: **the prophet of salvation,**
 the harbinger of day.

One: On those who sit in darkness
 the sun begins to rise,
All: **the dawning of forgiveness**
 upon the sinner's eyes.
One: God guides the feet of pilgrims

along the paths of peace.
**All: O bless our God and Savior
with songs that never cease!**

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***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Trusting in your grace,
we make our confession to you, O Lord;
for against you, and you alone, we have sinned,
when we are so full of ourselves that we cannot see the error of our ways.
We abuse our power and abuse one another.
We condemn one another and condone what we know to be wrong.
We are so focused on the mistakes of others,
that we are blind to our own.
We are so consumed by what we want,
that we do not consider the common good.
Forgive us, gracious and merciful God.
Transform our ways as a mirror of your generosity.
Renew our hearts as vessels of your love.
Instill our lives with the life of your Son,
born in our midst,
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 and loved! “Glory to God in the highest heaven!”**

***THE PEACE**

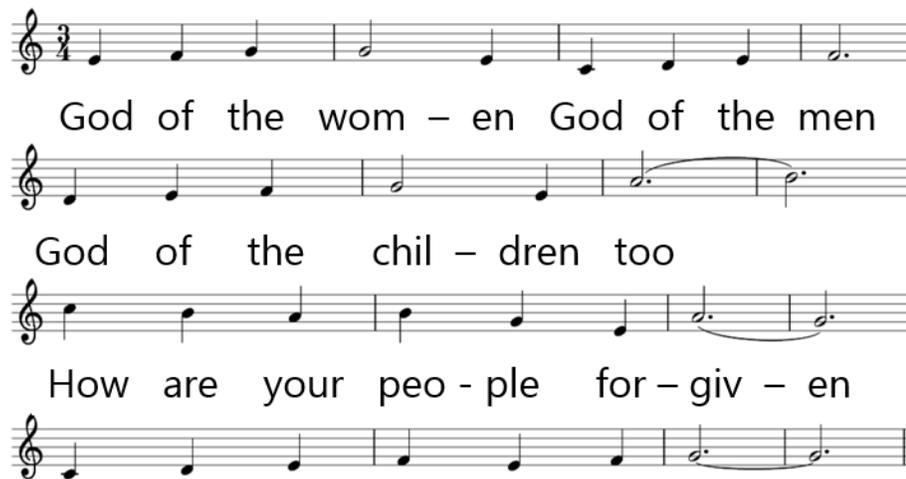
One: The peace of Christ be with you.
All: **And also with you.**
(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING II Samuel 11:1-12:25 (selected verses)

THE ADVENT WREATH (Mothers of Messiah): Bathsheba

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God of the wom - en God of the men
God of the chil - dren too
How are your peo - ple for - giv - en
How do your peo - ple know grace

*ROEDER (God of the Sparrow), Tune by Carl Schalk.
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PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON "Birth of Grace and Forgiveness" by Pastor Bill Vincent

***HYMN** "What Child Is This" GtG 145

- 1. 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?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!**
- 2. Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through;
the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,**

the babe, the son of Mary!

- 3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high.
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!**

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***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: O God, who is with us,
God of grace,...

People: ...hear our prayer.

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*

O God, what gift can we bring that is worthy of the Christ Child? We bring what we can; we bring who we are. With the offerings we bring, we present ourselves to be used by you to let others know of the coming of your Son and the wonders of your grace and love. Amen.

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" GtG 119

- 1. 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!"**
- 2. Christ, by highest heaven 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 in flesh with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

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

People: ...Amen.

POSTLUDE

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