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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Prelude

Sussex Carol, Traditional English Carol

Welcome & Announcements

Leader: This is a day that God has made!

All: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Time for sharing news of the church.

Crossing the Threshold

Leader: This week we turn to Luke's writing, which is an account in two acts: the Gospel biography of Jesus and then the story of the early church – the "Jesus community."

People: **Whether you were a Jew or Gentile in those days, deciding to become a part of this illegal early Christian movement could bring punishment for your allegiance.**

Leader: Surely the message in both Luke and Isaiah that the downcast, lowly, and oppressed would rise up is a welcome and inspirational account.

People: **Like the Jewish exiled people of Isaiah's time and like the early Christians, we also sometimes wonder where God is in our suffering.**

Leader: We long to hear the promise that a reason for joyful praise is the good news on the way!

The Threshold Music

I Believe
by Mark Miller

Opening Prayer and Lighting the Joy Candle on the Advent Wreath

Leader: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of the depths of Joy.
Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle –
even when we are not sure of your presence, ignite the flame of Joy within us.

People: **...that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.**

The Threshold Music Reprise

Leader: Help us face the silence of unknowing
and embrace it as the pregnant pause before joyful new beginnings.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: You are invited to light your own Joy candle of Advent.

Gathering Advent Song

All Hail to God's Anointed
Glory to God #149, v. 1-4

Invitation to Confession

Leader: Hope, joy, forgiveness, life –
these are the gifts God offers to us in this season of preparation and anticipation.
But too often, we put God's love to the test,
with our foolish behavior and unwise choices.
Let us confess the lives we leading, praying:

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Anointer of Righteousness: you whisper songs about mercy to us, but we would rather rejoice in another's misery. When we would dam off the Spirit with our should and shall nots, you knock down our words, so grace can flood into the world. When we gossip about the foolishness of friends, you testify to us of their compassion and kindness.

Forgive us, Giver of Grace. Salvation is your gift to us, not something we can buy on sale. Joy is that seed you plant deep within us, so we may share the harvest with all we meet. Hope is the healing offered to our brokenness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior who came and is coming again. Amen.

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

Leader: This is the good news: God anoints us with grace and peace,
not so we can become better than others,
but so we can be the servants of a hurting and hungering world.

People: **We will go, taking the good news with us,
testifying to all we meet, with our words, our hearts, our lives.
Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Alleluia!**

Passing the Peace

Leader: Since God in Christ Jesus has forgiven us,
let us forgive one another.
The peace of Jesus Christ be with you all.
Please share the peace of Jesus Christ
with those with whom you are joining us for worship.

Song of Praise

This Little Light of Mine
v. 3

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination

Leader: God of unseen angels and unheard greetings, whose love for humankind continues even when we are inattentive, favor us now with a message we cannot ignore. Reign among us that we may respond to your call and serve with joy and faithfulness in the ways you envision for us. Make us instruments of your peace. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

Isaiah 57:14-19 (CEB version)

It will be said: “Survey, survey; build a road!
Remove barriers from my people’s road!”
The one who is high and lifted up,
who lives forever, whose name is holy, says:
I live on high, in holiness,
and also with the crushed and the lowly,
reviving the spirit of the lowly,
reviving the heart of those who have been crushed.

I won’t always accuse,
nor will I be enraged forever.
It is my own doing that their spirit is exhausted—
I gave them breath!
I was enraged about their illegal profits;
I struck them; in rage I withdrew from them.
Yet they went on wandering wherever they wanted.
I have seen their ways, but I will heal them.
I will guide them,
and reward them with comfort.

And for those who mourn,
I will create reason for praise:
utter prosperity to those far and near,
and I will heal them, says the Lord.

The Witness of Music

Las Posadas

The litany *Para pedir posada* (“Asking for a place to stay”) is sung during the Christmas festival celebrations of *Las Posadas* (The Inns) in Mexico and other parts of the Latin America. It reenacts Mary and Joseph seeking lodging, being turned away at various places until finally finding shelter. The first half of the song is sung by those acting as Joseph and Mary, going door to door, and then various neighbors would respond in the second half that they don’t have room. Then one house would be the “final” inn, and they would sing a refrain as they welcome the travelers in.

We are adapting the song so the entrance refrain is sung every week of Advent. The translation is:

Come in, holy pilgrims! Receive this corner!

Because, even though the place is poor, I offer it to you from my heart.

Refrain:

¡En - tren san - tos Pe - re - gri - nos, Pe - re - gri - nos! ¡Re - ci -
po - bre la mo - ra - da, la - mo - ra - da, os la

4
1. 2.
-ban es - te rin - cón! Aun - que es
doy de co - ra - - - - zón.

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 1:1-4, 26-56 (CEB version)

Many people have already applied themselves to the task of compiling an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used what the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed down to us. Now, after having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, I have also decided to write a carefully ordered account for you, most honorable Theophilus. I want you to have confidence in the soundness of the instruction you have received...

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God."

Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said,

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.
He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

because the mighty one has done great things for me.
 Holy is his name.
 He shows mercy to everyone,
 from one generation to the next,
 who honors him as God.
 He has shown strength with his arm.
 He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.
 He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
 and lifted up the lowly.
 He has filled the hungry with good things
 and sent the rich away empty-handed.
 He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
 remembering his mercy,
 just as he promised to our ancestors,
 to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever.”
 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her home.

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.
 People: **Thanks be to God.**

Message: **“I Believe in God: Ode to Joy”**

Rev. Marilyn Gamm

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Carol of Response

Savior of the Nations, Come
Glory to God #102, v 1-4

Litany of Belief

Leader: In times when humanity disappoints,
 perhaps when even our own thoughts and behaviors disappoint,
 it is an important act to call out, name and claim,
 the consequences of our wrongs.
 And in times of distress, it is a prophetic act to call out,
 name and claim, our belief in the hope for tomorrow.
 Hear these statements of belief from members of our own congregation:

Leader: I believe even when so many people in our world are spewing hate
 People: **that God is Love.**

Leader: I believe even when in times of bitter partisan and societal division
 People: **that we are all God's children.**

Leader: I believe that even when the world becomes crazy and unpredictable
 People: **that we continue to be a rock providing a constant presence
 and reminder of God's love and care for us.**

Leader: I believe even when a global pandemic
 has turned life as we have known it upside down
 People: **that hardship brings the best learning and growth.**

Leader: I believe that even when living through difficult and challenging times
 People: **that the connections we share make the hardship bearable.**

Leader: I believe that even when the Christian faith is ridiculed as lacking integrity, welcome and
 inclusivity

People: **that we are called to be a community that goes into the world,**

loves all people, grows active faith in Christ, and transforms people.
Amen.

Prayers in the Stillness

Leader: I invite you to get in a comfortable position of rest.
I invite you to get as quiet and still as you can.
I invite you to a deep breath and a deep listening posture –
perhaps eyes closed or fixed on a candle – as we prepare for a time of prayer.

The Stillness Music

In the Stillness
by Mark Miller, Lindy Thompson

Prayers of the People

A time for silent prayers will be offered during the Prayers of the People.

Leader: Meet me in the stillness, Lord.

Stillness Coda

In the Stillness
by Mark Miller, Lindy Thompson

The Lord's Prayer

John Galczynski

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 and Dedication of 2021 Financial Pledges to Trinity's Mission and Ministry

Invitation

Doxology

O Gladsome Light
Glory to God #672, v. 1

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

In our unworthiness, Holy God, may we yet bring gifts worthy to honor the Messiah. As we dedicate our 2021 financial pledges to Trinity's mission and ministry, may these gifts and future pledges contribute to the brokenhearted being led to enriching new celebrations. May they contribute to the lowly among us coming to know their true worth as persons chosen by you to do great things. By your mercy, may they contribute to the hungry being fed not only with bread but also with opportunities to feed others. We also give ourselves as your servants, for no gift is complete without personal commitment. Thank you, God, for expecting great things of us. Our spirits rejoice in the coming of our Savior, through whom we pray. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Carol of Resistance

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Glory to God #611, v 1-3

Commission and Blessing

Postlude

“The Shepherds at the Manger” from *Weihnachtsbaum*
by Franz Liszt

Participants in Today's Worship

Pastor – Marilyn Gamm

Director of Music & Pianist/Organist – Christian Hendricks

Liturgist – Jim Person

Children & Youth Minister – Hannah Peters

Communications Coordinator – Katie Gibbons

Technical Support – Dylan Voss and John Roman

Soloist – Evan Babel

Handbells – Kevin Harkins

The Trinity Choir:

Soprano – Aleta Klein, Cricket Gordon, Jenn Clodi, Madeline Black (Section Leader)

Alto – Connie Torretta, Margy Brown, Nancy Wagoner, Rachel Presti, Janelle Pierce (Section Leader)

Tenor – Brian Schroer, Pat Courtney, Evan Babel (Section Leader)

Bass – George Van Hare, Nigel Holloway, John Galczynski

Contact Trinity's staff and leadership by emailing admin@trinityucity.org or contacting the church office.

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWS AND NOTES FOR DECEMBER 13, 2020

We open our doors to all persons to join in worship, fellowship, educational programs, and service.

We welcome into membership all who profess faith in Jesus Christ without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, worldly conditions, sexual orientation, disability, or any other human condition.

We elect and ordain persons who are called by God and committed to serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church.

The sanctuary flowers were given in loving memory of Polly Brown by her daughter, Sylvia Washington. Polly was a long time and beloved member of Trinity who died in October of this year. She graced the presence of all those she met, and she is now one of the Saints of Trinity.

I Believe Even When....

The Worship Committee is excited to share that our theme for this year's four Sundays of Advent, for framing the traditional Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols, and for the Sunday after Christmas is "I Believe Even When...."

As the language of the soul even during these challenging times, this worship series is designed to focus upon and heighten our music appreciation "even when" we cannot be together in all the many ways we would prefer.

As such, our weekly worship format has been modified to include a time of "Threshold Music" as we from wherever we are gathering "enter" into the service, a time of appreciating the "Witness of Music" between the weekly Scripture readings and concluding each week with a "Carol of Resistance."

Our weekly services include an original “Litany of Belief” composed from the one-liners you have submitted that capture what we as a worshipping Christian community believe through which we will name and claim our belief in the hope for tomorrow.

And our services also include a time for “Prayers in the Stillness” at the beginning of our weekly prayers of the people.

Our January Sunday Symposium will be January 17 at 11:15 a.m. via Zoom. In addition to a time of fellowship, we will launch our third round of transitional conversations with the theme of “Seeking God’s New Thing: What is the Mission and Ministry God is Calling Us Toward?”

Watch the weekly newsletter, bulletin, and for special email announcements with more information in the coming weeks.

Working for justice means keeping the issues in the forefront of people's minds. Every Wednesday, members of First Presbyterian Church stand at their busy corner of Midland and Delmar, holding signs acknowledging that Black Lives Matter and demanding Justice for those who have been murdered.

They welcome us to join them each week. Currently they meet from 5:30-6:30pm each Wednesday, but will probably switch to 5-6pm once we have the time change. Please contact Liz Nelson for more details (314-359-2478; leithskye@gmail.com), or show up on the front lawn if First Pres with a sign and a desire for justice!

Trinity is “broadcasting” our Sunday morning 10 a.m. worship service via our Facebook page or you can watch the recording on YouTube later on Sundays. Those who participate in this way on home computers or mobile devices can even type messages to one another during the live service, such as doing a virtual passing of the peace. Also, Facebook has captions! While watching the service, find the gear icon at the bottom of the video and click on it. When you do, an option pops up to turn on closed captioning!

Kids and parents probably already know about this, but if you are not a parent of a young person and have **wondered what goes on in “Children’s Church,” now you can experience it!** Hannah Peters has taped a YouTube video, and updated links will be posted regularly on the “Sundays at Trinity” section of our website homepage.

As we live in this challenging time, Trinity continues to be available to all those who need us.

Members desiring pastoral care are encouraged to call the church office at 314-725-3840 or to reach out to Deacons Margy Brown, 314-452-7241, or Cathy Smith, 314-725-0586. Your need will be shared confidentially with our Transitional Pastor the Reverend Marilyn Gamm. You also can email her directly at Marilyn.Gamm@TrinityUCity.org

Supporting the church through your financial gifts continues to be encouraged! Please mail your contributions to Trinity Presbyterian Church, Att’n: Linde, 6800 Washington Ave., University City, MO 63130, or check out the online giving instructions below.

1) Text the code TPCDONATE \$[your gift] to 73256. You'll receive a text back with a link that lets you complete your online donation.

2) Log in to your Realm account and click on the "Giving" tab.

Session

Gordon Brown, Dayna Early, Nigel Holloway, Kris Kerr, Mary Klingensmith, Mike Krivonak, Mary McKown, Brian Muegge (Clerk), Rachel Presti, John Roman, Jan Schulte-Glad, George Van Hare

Deacons

Margy Brown, Bill Cahoon, Kathie Cahoon, Anna Gardner-Andrews, Jennifer Higginbotham, Corie Merker,
Jim Person, Art Platt, Diana Regan, Joanne Roman, Cathy Smith, Spirit Sorensen