



Trinity Presbyterian Church
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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Prelude

City of God

by Dan Schutte, acc. by John Weissrock

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: The “great light” prophesied by Isaiah in today’s text is echoed in the first strains of John’s Gospel good news: the Light that brings Peace – that saves people from all that would extinguish it – has been there from the beginning.

People: **The Word is made flesh and dwells among us.**

Leader: This reign is now...will we believe it?

People: **Will we continue to put flesh on it, embodying the Peace meant for all humanity?**

The Threshold Music

I Believe

by Mark Miller

Opening Prayer and Lighting the Peace Candle on the Advent Wreath

Leader: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of Peace on earth.
Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle –
even when we aren't sure that goodwill among us can be found,
ignite the flame of Peace within us.

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

The Threshold Music Reprise

Leader: Help us face the pain of life
and embrace the assurance that Light is already here, and always coming.

People: Amen.

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

Gathering Advent Song

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Glory to God #88, v. 1-4

Invitation to Confession

Leader: The coming of Christmas challenges our pretensions.
We who have sought to organize and manage the world
through our finite understandings are confronted with God's Prince of Peace.
A little Child carries God's revelation, and we are convicted of our neglect.
Let us seek to reclaim God's mercy as we pray together:

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Gracious God, you have sent your Light of the world to us to show us the way. Even when we have turned our backs, followed our own paths, you offer us Light. Forgive us when we are so willful and stubborn. Forgive us when we think more about ourselves and our comforts than we think of reaching out to others. Remind us again that Jesus as the Wonderful Counselor witnessed to us the Light of Love that serves, guides and heals. Thank you for loving us so much that you would give us this most precious gift. And when we again falter and fail, lift us again with your gentle, Prince of Peace touch. Pour the Light into our lives once more, that finally, we will fully understand the power and depth of your love for us. We pray through our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty and Eternal God, Prince of Peace, and the Light of the world. Amen.

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

Leader: The Word made flesh in Jesus is for us. God's gift of new life is ever available.
God grants us power to change when that is our sincere desire.
The Holy Spirit is at work in our midst, infusing us with both power and peace.
We are destined to live as children of God.

**People: With faith we can live our beliefs, praising God, who has blessed us in Christ.
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.

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination

Leader: Light of the world, whose coming reordered human priorities, dwell with us here, that your Word may refresh us, and your truth reshape us. Reveal your will to us in ways we cannot escape or ignore. Deepen our respect for your law and our faithfulness to the truth we encounter in Jesus, your Christ. May your Word move through us with life-changing power. We pray through our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty and Eternal God, Prince of Peace. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

“Isaiah: The Coming of the Light” Light for the Darkness Video

Isaiah 9: 2-7 (NRSV version)

The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
 on them light has shined.
 You have multiplied the nation,
 you have increased its joy;
 they rejoice before you
 as with joy at the harvest,
 as people exult when dividing plunder.
 For the yoke of their burden,
 and the bar across their shoulders,
 the rod of their oppressor,
 you have broken as on the day of Midian.
 For all the boots of the tramping warriors
 and all the garments rolled in blood
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
 For a child has been born for us,
 a son given to us;
 authority rests upon his shoulders;
 and he is named
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 His authority shall grow continually,
 and there shall be endless peace
 for the throne of David and his kingdom.
 He will establish and uphold it
 with justice and with righteousness
 from this time onward and forevermore.
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

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 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

1. 2.

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

Second Scripture Reading

John 1: 1-18 (CEB version)

In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.
Everything came into being through the Word,
and without the Word
nothing came into being.
What came into being
through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning
the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't
the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light.

The true light that shines on all people
was coming into the world.
The light was in the world,
and the world came into being through the light,
but the world didn't recognize the light.
The light came to his own people,
and his own people didn't welcome him.
But those who did welcome him,
those who believed in his name,
he authorized to become God's children,
born not from blood

nor from human desire or passion,
but born from God.

The Word became flesh
and made his home among us.
We have seen his glory,
glory like that of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.

John testified about him, crying out, "This is the one of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than me because he existed before me.'"

From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace;
as the Law was given through Moses,
so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.
No one has ever seen God.
God the only Son,
who is at the Father's side,
has made God known.

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Message: **"I Believe in the Light: Illuminating Peace"**

Rev. Marilyn Gamm

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Advent Song of Response

The People Who Walked in Darkness

Glory to God #86, v 1-5

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

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

Doxology

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

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

Thank you, God, for the Word that came to live among us, bringing life and a vision of glory. Thank you for your steadfast love and faithfulness even when we have not listened or responded to your will. May this offering represent our growing awareness of the larger vision to which you call us. We dedicate these tokens toward sharing the Light of this season among the principalities and powers that seek to wrest the world from your hands. Draw our hearts to follow our treasure into the work you are calling us to do. We pray through our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty and Eternal God, Prince of Peace, and the Light of the world. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Carol of Resistance

Go, Tell It on the Mountain
Glory to God #136, v 1-3

Commission and Blessing

Postlude

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

Participants in Today's Worship

Pastor – Marilyn Gamm

Director of Music & Pianist/Organist – Christian Hendricks

Liturgist – Diane O'Brien

Children & Youth Minister – Hannah Peters

Communications Coordinator – Katie Gibbons

Technical Support – Dylan Voss and John Roman

Soloist – Janelle Pierce

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 20, 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.

Our guest preacher next Sunday, December 27 will be the Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt, Co-Moderator of the More Light Presbyterians Board of Directors.

Rev. DeTar Birt is a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary where she obtained her Master of Divinity degree. She also holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.

She currently serves as the Pastoral Fellow for Youth and Families at Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York, NY working with what she calls "some of the most fun kids she's ever met."

Her interests include the intersections of racial justice, children and youth, interfaith communication, LGBTQ+ issues (particularly the B), and Christianity.

When she isn't at church or doing social justice work, she enjoys writing, sound editing and theatre tech.

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.

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