

Virtual Worship Service for the Lord's Day
The Third Sunday of Advent, December 12, 2021
Crossnore Presbyterian Church
200 Chapel Drive, P.O. Box 386
Crossnore, NC 28616



Welcome and Church Family News (PDF attachment)

Choral Call to Worship: *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

~arr. by Chad Fothergill

Duke University Chapel choirs and orchestra: <https://youtu.be/kmtqYfRB1wA>

Lighting of the Advent Candles of Peace, Hope, and Joy

Reader One:

Sometimes when we are trying something new,
or when we are facing a difficult decision,
or when we want to celebrate something,
or when we just feel lost and alone
and uncertain about life, the universe and everything,
we need a blessing.

We don't always think of it that way, or word it like that.
We say we need advice, or support, or companions,
or someone to come along beside and lift us up again
so we can see more than the tops of our shoes.
We seek a blessing.

Reader Two:

For many of us, we go home; we ask loved ones, close friends,
those we grew up with, those who know us best.
We want them alongside; we want to be in their presence.
Somehow, we know that being there, being home, will make all things better.
Maybe it won't be fixed, or solved, or wished away,
but at least we won't be alone.
We seek a blessing.

Reader One:

Mary, faced with an incomprehensible burden and gift,
ran to Cousin Elizabeth's house,
looking for someone who knew a little of what she was going through,
looking for a place to hide
until the reality of her condition could become something real.
And she received a blessing.

The prophet Micah spoke of a blessing coming to an unexpected place,
an unassuming town.
Yet by God's grace this little town would become the means
through which God would bless the whole world.
Bethlehem, the little town of blessing.
We seek a blessing.

Reader Two:

We light these candles, the candle of hope, of peace, and of joy
 as a sign that we know what it means to wait for a blessing.
 We light these candles as a sign that we still seek a blessing.
 It's time to go home.

Call to Worship:

We see light, hope, and joy;

We bring heart, soul, mind, and body;

We share blessings and fears;

We bring faith and doubt.

With all that we are and all that we have, let us worship God.

Hymn of Praise # 104 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

VALET WILL ICH DER GEBEN

Sing along with Geneva Presbyterian Church, Laguna Hills, CA: https://youtu.be/d_up_TRb7GI

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
 how welcome you aright?
 Your people long to greet you,
 my hope, my heart's delight!
 O kindle, Lord most holy,
 a lamp within my breast,
 to do in spirit lowly
 all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation;
 love brought you down to me;
 your thirst for my salvation
 procured my liberty.
 O love beyond all telling,
 that led you to embrace
 in love, all loves excelling,
 our lost and fallen race.

You come, O Lord, with gladness,
 in mercy and goodwill,
 to bring an end to sadness
 and bid our fears be still.
 In patient expectation
 we live for that great day
 when your renewed creation
 your glory shall display.

Call to Confession:

Every moment of living is an opportunity to do something differently, to face the truth of our lives, to turn toward God in hope. Every confession of those things which lie in hearts is an opportunity to come closer to God. Trusting in God's grace and mercy, let us then make our confession before God and each other.

Unison Prayer of Confession:

Most High, we sing your praises, for your love endures forever. Mary bore the ultimate revelation of your divine love, the baby Jesus. And now we thank you for the privilege of bearing your love in the world. We confess that often we have failed you in this commission. At times, we have questioned this call, saying "How can this be?" Other times, we have failed to offer love out of fear of rejection or self-involvement. Send your Holy Spirit upon us. Strengthen us and show us where revealing your love can bring new life (moment of silent confession). Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

When Mary found that she would bear God's love in the world by giving birth to a baby, she asked the same question: "How can this be?" And the angel answered: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For nothing will be impossible with God." Nothing is ever impossible with God. Be therefore assured that by the power of the Holy Spirit we, too, shall carry God's love into the world.

Response to God's Grace and Mercy # 95 *Prepare the Way of the Lord*

PREPARE THE WAY

<https://youtu.be/FDHX8evCCcA> - The Courtyard Choir, First Presbyterian Church - Stillwater, OK

**Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord;
and all people shall see the salvation of our God.**

**Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord;
and all people shall see the salvation of our God.**

Prayer of Illumination:

Holy Spirit, Holy Word, may your love leap within us
and your stories seal themselves to our hearts.

As we prepare to welcome Jesus Christ,
may we first welcome your wisdom to our worship. Amen.

First Lesson: Micah 5:2-5

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Special Music: *Canticle of Turning*

<https://youtu.be/F9QeTmRCpW4>

text by Rory Cooney, 1990
Irish melody arr. by Rory Cooney

Second Lesson: Luke 1:39-56

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Sermon: "It All Matters" (PDF attachment)

Rev. Kathy Campbell

Affirmation of Faith (written by Ann Siddall):

**Our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior,
for he looks with favor upon us and sees our unrealized potential.**

**In the tradition of Mary, and all who have said "yes" to God,
we stand here today, to add our assent to theirs.**

**Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed; we wonder if we are worthy,
or capable, of following the calling.**

Like Mary, we have our questions and we will not be afraid to ask them.
Like Mary, we will hear and ponder the assurance that God will empower us.
Like Mary we will strive to say -“Let it be with us according to your will.”

To whatever God is inviting of us at this time in our lives,
and relying on God’s grace, we say “yes.”

Hymn of Meditation # 105 *People Look East*, verses 1, 3, 5

BESANCON

Sing along with: <https://youtu.be/wcqPz6rH0vl>

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

Prayers of the People:

Great God of the prophets and truth-tellers,
Great Voice of Truth who speaks through unexpected voices,
Great Power of the Universe who works mighty deeds from fragile possibilities,
we gather here to know Your presence and to listen for Your truth.
We listen in Your presence. We listen for You.

Let our listening reach to hear the voice of young Mary.
Let us listen for her voice,
the voice of an adolescent girl in an insignificant village in a marginal province,
far from the centers of power.

Extend our listening to hear her where she may be speaking today:
an adolescent girl in a village in rural China whose parents really wanted a boy;
a girl in a remote native village in Latin America leading the singing in a small church;
a 14-year-old working for a tiny wage in a crowded factory somewhere making our high-priced running shoes;
a 15-year-old helping her village in West Africa recover from civil war;
a high school student in a U.S. city resisting a culture of violence daily to attend school.

Extend our listening, God,
to hear the song of truth and hope You are putting in their mouths,

to sense the motion of a future You are moving in their midst, a future world put right.

Extend our listening, God,
that we may receive and affirm and listen
with the eager ears of elderly Elizabeth, wise with years of waiting.

Let us listen fully and deeply for the hope You are preparing.
Let us greet Your hope with the Elizabeth's joy greeting Mary.
Let us feel the future moving in us as well.
Let us listen fully and deeply for the hope You are preparing in us.
Let us listen deeply to the truth speaking in us.

Extend our listening to the deepest reaches of our own souls, God of Truth.
Extend our listening through the cares that each of us brings on our hearts this morning:
the financial worries and the preoccupation with our health,
our concern for loved ones whose lives are straying out of control,
our anger and aggravation, our inundation with activity.

Extend our listening into all that we bring today
to hear there the transforming truth about our lives
until we listen with all that we are, our whole beings,
until we hear with Your whole voice.

Extend our listening until we become the voice that speaks as Mary to say,
"My soul magnifies God and my spirit rejoices."

Extend our listening that we may magnify You in Christ,
our Savior, who taught his disciples to pray: Our Father...

(adapted from a prayer written by Dr. Susan M. (Elli) Elliott, December 12, 2004)

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings:

God is with us in amazing and powerful ways, bringing shining new hope into the world. Like Mary and Elizabeth so long ago, the ministry of our church is radiant with that great hope. And like Mary and Elizabeth, we trust in the promises of God. In our giving this morning, our joy overflows in generosity. Let us receive this morning's offering.

Offertory: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

The Hall Sisters sing: <https://youtu.be/xruF5sK6rPA>

Doxology # 606

OLD HUNDREDTH

<https://youtu.be/joCinBhj4a4> Acappella Cover - Isaac Robert

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Unison Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving:

Holy One, this Advent season we wait in joy, and we give with joy for all you have given us; joy because of your sacred promises. Receive these generous offerings, and use them to spread your joy in our world. Amen.

Closing Hymn # 113 *Angels We Have Heard On High*

GLORIA

Sing along with Libera: <https://youtu.be/X7MTjm6UYA>

Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Charge and Benediction:

May you be strengthened as you go forth to carry God's love, as Mary did.
A love that is radical, powerful, and life-affirming.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you now and forevermore. Amen.

Postlude: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

Performed by the Piano Guys, Peter Hollens, and David Archuleta

<https://youtu.be/ELjgFKACcdQ>

(a bit of early Christmas...I couldn't help myself)