

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
December 11, 2022
Third Sunday of Advent



COVID-19 Safety Recommendations

- *Masking is now optional during the service (including while singing).*
- *Remember that young children may not have been vaccinated.*

Preparation: “Hope is the mood of Christmas; the raw materials are a newborn babe, a family, and work. Even in the grimness of the postwar world, babies are being born—an endless procession that is life’s answer to death. Life keeps coming on, keeps seeking to fulfill itself, keeps affirming the possibility of hope.” Howard Thurman in the essay “Christmas Candles.”

“The way any particular age has depicted Jesus is often a key to the genius of that age.” Jaroslav Pelikan in *Jesus Through the Centuries*.

Prelude Chorale Partita on *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* Friedrich Zachau
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organist

Choral Introit *How Great our Joy*
PCO Chancel Choir

Invitation to our Shared Ministry Pastor Lisa Schrott

Call to Worship Catherine Holdway, Liturgist

One: We believe in a God who offers second chances and does not hold grudges.

All: We believe in a God who opens the door to new life and leaves the porch light on for us when we get lost.

One: We believe in a God who believes in us—believes that we can make a difference,

All: that we can choose grace over comparison, love over hate, peace over war.

One: And so we strive to live our lives in love. We strive to listen as Joseph listened, and to be the people that God calls us to be.

All: It’s all that easy, and it’s all that hard.

* **Hymn #111** *From Heaven Above*, vs. 1-4
[Vom Himmel Hoch]

Prayer of Confession Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: The prayer of confession is an opportunity to slow down. We reflect on the decisions that we’ve made this past week and we ask for God’s mercy to be in all of them. And without fail, God wiggles God’s self into the cracks of our lives, and we are made better for it. So with that confidence, let us go to God in prayer:

All: God of mercy, a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious, to assume the best in others, to give the benefit of the doubt. A million times a day we could choose the better way, but so often we don't. Fear and greed kick in. Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel. Comparison and critique lead the charge. Forgive us for forgetting that we are descendants of Joseph. Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood. Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you. Give us the courage to love even bigger than before, and the wisdom to choose a better way. Amen.

Promise of the Gospel

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Family of Faith, hear this good news: we who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance. We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community. We who feel alone, are seen, held, and known.

All: This is the good news of the gospel. No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way, God continues to be a God of second chances, community, and love. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: As a forgiven people, let us greet each other, sharing the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you. *Please greet your fellow worshippers in ways you feel comfortable.*

*** Act of Praise #583**

Gloria, Gloria

Jacques Berthier

[Gloria]

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Lighting the Candle of Joy

Alex, Sophia, Chandra and John Juarez

Children are invited to come forward as we light the Advent candles and begin our journey to Bethlehem.

Journey to Bethlehem

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 11:1-5

Nativity: Joseph

Musical Response

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

arr. John O'Reilly

In The Bleak Mid-Winter

& John Kinyon

Youth Instrumental Choir

Sarah Mayhew, Director

Maddie Pearson, trumpet

Connor Haskel, cello

Alex Juarez, trumpet

Andrew Mayhew, euphonium

Lizzie Conroy-Krutz, violin

Lucas Meland, piano

Children's Worship Experience

Children ages 3-8 may depart for the Chapel following the musical response.

Prayer of Illumination

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

Loving God, we know that pain cannot be unmade, that life cannot be un-lived, that time will not run backward and that we cannot un-choose our choices. But remind us always of your promise that our pain can be healed, our choices can be redeemed, and that our lives are suffused with love that brings us home. May we hear this morning that you, oh God, cover us all with forgiving love. And let some word of this be yours. Amen.

Scripture

Matthew 1:18-25

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

Sermon*From Generation to Generation: We Can Choose A Better Way**Origin Stories*

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

Special Music*Child of Peace*

Jeffrey Van

PCO Chancel Choir

Sleep, O sleep Thou lovely Child divine;
 Love distilled in humble form so fine.
 May Thy slumber keep Thee now from pain;
 Long and weary journey yet remains.
 God of love who gave this little one,
 God of love who came to overcome,
 Holy Spirit, God and Christ in one Child.

Wise men sought a King and journeyed far,
 Guided by a strange and glorious star,
 Offering gifts of incense, myrrh and gold,
 Witnessing the holy birth foretold.
 When we seek Thee Jesus may we be
 Guided to Thy cradle there to see
 Prophecies fulfilled and hope revealed.

Child of peace who came so long ago,
 Child of love still with us here we know,
 May Thy tears of passion freely flow,
 Melting hearts within us cold as snow,
 He is come to be our dearest kin,
 He is come to take from us our sin,
 Jesus come and make us safe within You.

Minute for Mission

Advent House - Lessons & Carols

Bill Given

Offering

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

Invitation

We will be collecting the Joy Offering through December 18. Envelopes are available at the Welcome Table or you may indicate Joy Offering on your check or electronic transaction.

Offertory

Fugue on Noel Nouvelet

Richard Hudson

*Doxology #606

*Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

Catherine Holdway, Liturgist

One: Lord in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer "...forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors..."

* **Hymn #134**

Joy to the World, vs. 1-4
[Antioch]

* **Benediction**

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

As you leave this place, may you go knowing that
from generation to generation, we have been claimed and loved.
From generation to generation, God has been by our side.
From generation to generation, we are not alone.
The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow
knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth,
saying, “Go be the person you are called to be,
love wildly, do justice, and come back soon.”
May it be so. Amen.

Postlude

Joy to the World
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organist

Kristina Langlois

* *Please rise in body or spirit*

* *Education and Fellowship Info included in this week’s announcements.*

This morning’s liturgy is adapted from work by the Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed. Graphic design by the Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman. A Sanctified Art LLC - *From Generation to Generation*. sanctifiedart.org. The Prayer of Illumination this morning is adapted from a blessing written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his book *Made for Goodness*.

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