GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Service of Worship  December 6, 2020 10:00am
2nd Sunday of Advent

Gathering

PRELUDE  “Good Christians All, Rejoice”  14th c. German Melody
Exaltation! & Jubilation! Ringers
IN DULCI JUBILO
Kathy Bures, director
arr. Jason W. Krug

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Now is the time, let us pause.
As we wait, may we hear the voice of God.
Now is the time, let us watch.
In our homes, at our work, even while waiting in line—
may we see the face of Christ.
Now is the moment, let us prepare our hearts.
In our words, in our hearts, in all we say and do—
may God’s extravagant love shine through.

HYMN 93  “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”  TRURO
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93

1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the
2 Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a
3 Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to

King of glory waits; the King of kings is
temple, set apart from earthly use for
thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me thy inner

drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.
heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.
presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7-10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer’s heart, and concludes with the individual’s welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.
LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH  

HYMN  
“Light the Advent Candle Two”  
Chancel Ensemble sings first; All repeat

Light the Advent candle two  
Think of angel’s heavenly tune.  
Angels singing "Peace on Earth"  
At the Blessed Savior’s birth.

Chorus:  
Candle, candle burning bright  
Shining in the cold winter night  
Candle, candle burning bright  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

A TIME WITH STEWART

ADVENT PRAYER (video)

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S LOVE & SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One:  May the peace of Christ be with you.
All:   And also with you and all others!

HYMN 121  
“O Little Town of Bethlehem”  
(VERSES 1 & 2)  
ST. LOUIS
JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

121 O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
3 How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;

A bove thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Though he was famed during his lifetime as a great preacher, no sermon Phillips Brooks ever preached has been heard or read by as many people as have sung this carol he wrote in December 1868 for the Sunday School children of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.
LESSON FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Micah 5:2–5a

(Common English Bible)

“As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
though you are the least significant of Judah’s forces,
one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you.
His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.
Therefore, he will give them up
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.
The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.
He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
They will dwell secure,
because he will surely become great throughout the earth;
he will become one of peace.”

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 1:18–25

(Comon English Bible)

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to
Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her
husband was a righteous man. Because he didn’t want to humiliate her, he decided to
call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord
appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary
as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give
birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their
sins.” Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet
would be fulfilled:

Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they will call him, Emmanuel.⁴
(Emmanuel means “God with us.”)

When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as
his wife. ²⁵ But he didn’t have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son.
Joseph called him Jesus.
ANTHEM
“Festive Hodie”
Exaltation! Singers – Linda Bruns, piano
Rebecca Prater, director
Hodie Christus natus est (Today Christ is born)
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Glory to God in the highest)

Music by Greg Gilpin

Traditional Latin Text

SERMON
“From Sending Cards to Sending Peace”
Rev. Mitch Trigger

Sending

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

HYMN 88
“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”
(Verses 1, 6, & 7 only)

VENI EMMANUELU
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
2 O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
4 O come, thou Root of Jesse, free thine own from captives Israel, that mourns in lonely exile
all things mightily; to us the path of knowledge
tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times didst give the Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell thy people
here until the Son of God appeared.
show; and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.
CHARGE & BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Linda Dover, organist

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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