

LOVE

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
December 20, 2020
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

While in-person Worship services are suspended, Montgomery Presbyterian Church will be recording services. The following is an order of service that you can use to follow along with the recorded service, or use to read and reflect on your own. The service will be posted on the church's Facebook page, on YouTube, and will be linked to the MPC website, www.mpchurch.net. Thank you for your cooperation and patience during this challenging time.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Elder of the Month: Pam Koester, 322-8810
- Deacon of the Month: Sue Poulos, 376-1623

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 89

I will sing about the wonders of your love forever, O God!
I will tell everyone I meet about your faithfulness to all generations!
I will declare that your love stands firm,
that your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens above!
Blessed are those who know you as their God,
for they walk in the light of your presence!

Let us worship God.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

We light the Advent candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let all creation sing for joy at the coming of the Lord.

Psalm 96

We light this candle in hope.

The Lord of hosts is coming to restore us;
God's face will shine, and we will be saved.

Psalm 80

We light this candle in peace.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Psalm 85

We light this candle in joy.

When the Lord restores our lives,
we will be like those who dream;
those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.

Psalm 126

We light this candle in love.

We will sing of God's steadfast love forever;
we will proclaim the faithfulness of the Lord to all generations.

Psalm 89

Light dawns for the righteous, and joy to the upright in heart.

Rejoice in the Lord! Give thanks to God's holy name.

Psalm 97

HYMN

Savior of the Nations, Come

GTG 102, v. 1-4

PRAYER

Holy God of Joy,
We rejoice in the reality of who you are.
We live within the joy of your love for us.
Our contentment comes and goes.
Our happiness ebbs and flows.
Our feelings depend upon our circumstances,
our physical health, our brain chemistry.
But our *joy* is deeply rooted
in our identity as your beloved children.
And we give you thanks. Amen.

Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins to the One whose mercy endures from generation to generation.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, and touch, and easily believe. But you did not ask us to believe what is easy, you have asked us to believe what is true!

Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story. Forgive us we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us. Forgive our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe.

Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son, born of a virgin –the one who has come to set us all free. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Silence is kept

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Sisters and brothers, by the faith of Christ, your sins are forgiven. Blessed be the God of our salvation, whose mercy is everlasting. Amen.

HYMN

Watchmen, Tell Us of the Night

GTG, 97

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Faithful God, you chose Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now fill us with your grace, that with her, we may understand your ways, rejoice in your salvation, and embrace your will; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

SPECIAL MUSIC

SECOND READING

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

MESSAGE

Rev. Ben Shaw

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

... And now hear as we pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.

BLESSING AND CHARGE

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all this day, and unto your life eternal. Amen.

POSTLUDE