

Sunday December 19, 2021
Mary's Blessedness

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: Enwombed one! Dependent one!
People: Triumphant one! Mighty one!
Leader: Toppling-expectations-one!
People: Magnified one! Satisfying-with-Justice one!
Leader: We are hungry for you.
People: Fill us with your good things.

Opening Prayer **Unison**

**O God of Elizabeth and Mary,
you visited your servants with news of the world's redemption
in the coming of the Savior.
Make our hearts leap with joy,
and fill our mouths with songs of praise,
that we may announce glad tidings of peace,
and welcome the Christ in our midst. Amen.**

Advent Four Candle Lighting (Love)

Diane Wogaman & Jo-Anne Fournier

Advent Candle Readers: We now light our first three Advent candles representing Hope & Faith, Peace, and Joy.

Pastor: Love abundant overflows, pouring into our midst: Rise, take heart, and love deeply.
People: The glow of God the Divine Lover lightens our hearts.
Pastor: We are together and never alone. Gathered on this fourth Sunday in Advent we witness to God's deep love and tender compassion for the whole world. Our witness is love.
People: God's love comes to our ground of life like an arc, large in scope, embracing all in love, healing all by divine touch, and restoring all that is broken.

Advent Reflection on Love (Advent Candle Readers)

All these themes from the last four Sundays of Advent come together this morning as we celebrate our Lord's birth. The nerve, audacity, wisdom, and care of God becomes clear and evident as we open our hearts in Hope & Faith, Peace, Joy, and Love! Thank you, God, for re-creating us in the light Jesus brings to this world.

Lighting of the fourth Advent Candle

Let Us Pray (Advent Calendar Readers):

God-who-never-ceases-to-love, rekindle the fire of our hearts that we may burn anew with your love. Bless us with the flame of lively living and truthful believing. Take our words and release them to speak of you; take our minds and broaden them to reflect your overflowing love; take our hearts and set them alight with your desire for goodness. In the name of the One full of love as we uplift your birth Living Christ. Amen.

Hymn #122: Come, O Long-Expected Jesus
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

Hymn Leader: Carol Bellamy

- 1) Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free;
From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.
- 2) Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart;
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.
- 3) Born all people to deliver, born a child, you came to reign!
Born to rule on earth forever, come, be known to us again.
- 4) By your own eternal Spirit, come to claim us as your own;
By your all-sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.

Prayer of Confession **Unison**

(Based on Psalm 80:1-7)

Leader: Our God, restore us.

People: **Show us your true face and save us.**

Leader: We can ignore the weak and poor and leave them to fend for themselves.

People: **Show us your true face and save us.**

Leader: We can be caught in a cycle of uncaring wherein we seek escape and separateness from others who appear to be different from ourselves, not understanding mercy.

People: **Show us your true face and save us.**

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Assurance of Pardon

Our hope and our challenge is that the world is not much inclined to lean into the community of the beloved Jesus taught us about. As we muster the courage to seek, we may yet find him and his ways of loving presence. Call to us Living Christ, we will open to you in your love.

Passing of the Peace

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: **And also with you!**

Reading

Carla Crompton

Micah 5:2-5a (NIV)

5:2 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.

5:3 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.

5:4 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;

5:5 and he shall be the one of peace.

Special Music

Carol Bellamy

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39-55 (NIV)

1:39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,

1:40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

1:42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

1:43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?

1:44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.

1:45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

1:46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,

1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

1:48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

1:49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

1:50 His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

1:51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

1:52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

1:53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

1:54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

1:55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Musical Interlude

Sermon: Mary's Blessedness

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People

Hymn #119 My Soul Gives Glory to My God (verses 1, 3 and 5)

**1) My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.**

**3) From age to age, to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,
dispensing justice far and near, dismissing selfish hearts.**

**5) Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,
remembering past promises with present faithfulness.**

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer Unison

Offering Invitation

Jesus's cousin John leaped in his mother Elizabeth's womb,
Filled with joy at the mere nearness of God Incarnate.
How much more joyfully should we, fully embodied and fully aware
Of Christ's saving life, death, and resurrection,
Accept our calling to be with Christ Incarnate in our midst!
Let our gifts be pledges to live in covenant with our God of Peace.

Offering and Dedication Unison

**Emmanuel: God with us...
God, take these gifts and
with us create a new world:
Where we allow the "them" to become the "us"
The "those" to become the "us"
The "really?" to become the "really us!"
We are one body and always must be. Amen.**

Benediction Unison

**Enwombed one! Dependent one!
Triumphant one! Mighty one!
Toppling-expectations-one!
Send us forth in love
to bear your hope, peace, joy and justice into the world.**