

First Sunday after Christmas

December 27, 2009

Worship 10:30

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Prelude

Call to Worship

One: We welcome the Good News of Jesus' birth on this Christmas Sunday.

ALL: We celebrate the gift of Jesus who came to make real Advent's promises of HOPE (light 1st candle), PEACE (light 2nd candle), JOY (light 3rd candle), and LOVE (light 4th candle).

One: Now we light the candle that sets in the center of our Advent Wreath (light the Christ candle).

ALL: As the light of this candle begins to shine, may Christ's light also shine through us to help illuminate God's world.

* Hymn

"Joy to the World"

#73

* Bidding Prayer (Unison)

Fill our lives this day, wondrous God. May your presence so engulf our spirits that we might know you through infancy's wonder, through childhood's growth, through youthful searching, and through adulthood's uncertainties. Guide all our seeking, that it may lead to wisdom's source and faith's path. Amen.

Call to Confession

The poem, "A Prayer to the Infant Christ", helps us imagine how God is still being revealed in surprising, and sometimes unsettling ways, even today. As we read the words of the poem, reflect on where you have seen the presence of God revealed. Contemplate, also, the ways you have missed noticing God entering the world.

Prayer of Confession

Baby Jesus, tell me how it is you are born in every shade of skin. I saw you once on the train to Lujan. Your father played pan flutes for coins, your mother walked the aisle, palms out, and you rode, limp as a doll in that sling on her back.

I saw you, too, in a squatter's camp—Luanda, Angola. I'd followed Louise, the missionary, to sewing class. All of us wondered what your mother would name you once certain you would live.

I remember how I saw you affixed with tubes in the intensive care unit, on this side of the world. There were problems with your birth. Your parents struggle even now to accept you as you are.

And I nearly missed you yesterday, downtown, your mother too young, the cup at your feet cradling a bit of change. The bitter wind distracted me, and the concrete sky, the accumulation of trash. I'll admit I didn't want to see you in that place.

I don't need to tell you the daily news is bad and getting worse. Oh, light no darkness can overcome, let me not forget that every moment, still, still, you are born.

(A Prayer to the Infant Christ by Pamela Porter, Pamela Porter is a poet, a novelist, and teaches at the University of Victoria. Used by permission.)

(Silent Reflection and Prayers)

Assurance of God's Grace (Sung)

One: How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

**ALL: O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

One: Christ has come, and we are made new.

OPENING OURSELVES TO THE VOICE OF GOD

The Bible Reading St. Luke 2:1-7

Chancel Choir *"Can You See the Star"* Albrecht & Althouse

A Time for Young Christians

(Prayer requests and guest forms will be collected by ushers at the side aisles.)

Morning Message "Advent and Christmas" Jenn Owsley

Christmas Caroling

EXPRESSING OUR FAITH

Joining Our Voices in Prayer

Our prayer during this season of Christmas, wonderful God, is that this would be a time of real spiritual growth for us. Let the baby, who was born at Bethlehem, reign in our hearts. Turn the tragedy of the world into the triumph of your grace. Let all those who are sick, filled with remorse, overwhelmed by loss and grief, consumed by fears or encumbered by guilt, see the star shining brightly over the manger leading them to your hope, peace, joy, and love. Transform our vision, so that we may see the world differently. Help us to see it as you see it. Help us to embrace it with your passion and to extend to it your grace.

Receive now, Ever-giving God, the petitions we bring and the thanks we offer.

(Silent and spoken prayers may be added by the congregation.)

The Lord's Prayer

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, for ever. Amen.

Giving Our Tithes and Offerings

One: Out of our need, as Christians, to be generous and our desire to become whole in God's sight, we are invited to present our gifts and offer ourselves once more to the will and purpose of our Creator.

* Offertory Response

(Tune #148)

Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;

The Holy Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's salvation.

Raise, raise the song on high, the mother sings her lullaby;

Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!

*Offering Prayer

Bless these offerings, O God, to our growth and for the intentions you design. May all we give today honor the name of Jesus and make us more faithful followers of the Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

GOING FORTH TO WITNESS

* Closing Hymn

"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"

#59

* Benediction

One: We have celebrated the gift of Jesus' birth at Christmas.

ALL: Let us be filled with the Good News.

One: We know that God came to be with us, in Jesus, and is with us even now.

ALL: We go out to share that Good News.

One: May God's blessing go with us all. Amen.

* Musical Postlude