

Sunday, December 27, 2020

Prelude "What Child is This?"

Limestone Presbyterian

Call to Worshipⁱ

Debbie Foster

One: Christ is born!
Many: Hallelujah!
One: Jesus is among us!
Many: Hallelujah!
One: Shout with joy, give thanks, and sing!
Many: Christ is born!
One: Shout with joy, give thanks, and sing!
Many: Christ is born!
One: Shout with joy, give thanks, and sing!
Many: Christ is born!

Prayer of Adorationⁱⁱ

Opening Hymn 119

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (vs 1&3)

Fountain Inn Presbyterian

*Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king.
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"*

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"*

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Stan Reid

**Holy and loving God,
we look for you in the joyous, festive and holy places.
Forgive us when we do not look for you
in the hard times and the painful places,
or among those who are abused or forgotten, homeless or hungry.
We listen to Christmas stories and sing Christmas carols.
Forgive us when we fail to notice what you teach us,
what you ask of us, in the stories of the birth and life of Jesus.
As we celebrate the birth of one born homeless,
who lived in poverty, whose family fled in fear for their lives,
pursued by a ruthless dictator, help us to remember your compassion and care
for all who are vulnerable and in need.
Forgive us when we forget what Jesus showed us by his life,
and move us to respond to your gracious gift of love
by lovingly opening our arms to all people. Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

One: In God's mercy, God offers forgiveness and salvation.
Many: In love God redeems us, lifts us up and carries us. Thanks be to God!

Response Hymn 133**“O Come All Ye Faithful” (verses 1 & 3)**

Nazareth Presbyterian

*O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant;
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him,
born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord!*

*Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation.
Sing, all ye citizens of Bethlehem.
Glory to God,
Glory in the highest.
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord!*

THE STORY OF THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF CHRIST
(All readings from the *Common English Bible*)

Introduction to The Story of the Birth and Early Life of Christ

Pressley Cox

The Birth of Jesus

Matthew 1:18-24

Robin Morris

Hymn 126**“Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child”**

Fourth Presbyterian

*Jesus, Jesus, O what a wonderful child.
Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek and mild;
new life, new hope the child will bring.*

*Listen to the angels sing:
“Glory, glory, glory!”
Let the heavens ring.*

Jesus is Presented in the Jerusalem Temple Luke 2:21-38

LeAnne White

Hymn 148**“Mary and Joseph Came to the Temple”**

St. Andrews Presbyterian

*Mary and Joseph
came to the temple
brought the boy Jesus,
offered him there.
People were waiting
wanting to greet him;
long had they sought him,
solace for care.*

*Anna had prayed there,
widowed, long waiting,
worshiping God by
day and by night.
Now she is praising,
filled with elation:
here is God's promise,
Christ is her light.*

*Simeon sings now:
God proffers blessing,
brilliantly gilding
dawn of his day.
Light in the darkness,
never extinguished,
Light of all nations,
light up our way.*

Story for All God's Children

“The Magi Come to Honor Jesus”

Joan Jones

Hymn 151**“We Three Kings of Orient Are”. (verses 1 & 5)**

Eastminster Presbyterian

*We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!*

*Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
sounds through the earth and skies.
O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!*

Hymn 154

“Jesus Entered Egypt”

Eastminster Presbyterian

*Jesus entered Egypt
fleeing Herod’s hand,
living as an alien
in a foreign land.
Far from home and country
with his family,
was there room and
welcome for this refugee?*

*Jesus was a migrant
living as a guest
with the friends and strangers
who could offer rest.
Do we hold wealth lightly
so that we can share
shelter with the homeless,
and abundant care?*

*Jesus crosses borders
with the wand’ring poor,
Searching for a refuge,
for an open door.
Do our words and actions
answer Jesus’s plea:
“Give the lowly welcome,
and you welcome me”?*

Hymn 149

“All Hail to God’s Anointed” (verses 1, 2, & 3)

First Presbyterian, Spartanburg

*All hail to God’s anointed,
great David’s greater Son!
All hail, in time appointed,
your reign on earth begun!
You come to break
oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression
and rule in equity.*

*You come with rescue speedy
to those who suffer wrong,
to help the poor and needy
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and
dying,
are precious in your sight.*

*You shall come down like
showers
upon the fruitful earth;
love, joy, and hope, like
flowers,
spring in your path to birth.
Before you on the mountains
shall peace, the herald, go,
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.*

A Christmas Creed (Unison)

Pressley Cox

We believe in Jesus Christ and the beauty of the gospel born in Bethlehem.

**We believe in the One whose spirit glorified a little town,
whose spirit still brings light to all of creation.**

**We believe in the One the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand;
whose life was among common people;
who was most welcome among the least and lowly.**

We believe in the One who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible.

**We believe in the One whose cradle was a mother’s arms and whose bed was a feeding trough;
whose modest home in Nazareth had little wealth but lots of love;
who helped people see themselves as God saw them;
who lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.**

**We confess our everlasting need of God:
the need for forgiveness for our selfishness and greed;
the need of new life for weary souls;
the need of love for hearts grown cold.**

We believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

**We believe in Jesus, the Son of the living God, born in Bethlehem,
for us and for the whole world. Amen.**

One: God of love

Many: **Guide our feet into the way of peace.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

Call for the Offering

LeAnne White

Offertory Hymn 137

“He Came Down”

Townville Presbyterian

*He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have light;
He came down that we may have light;
He came down that we may have light;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy;
hallelujah forevermore.*

Prayer of Dedication

LeAnne White

Benediction Luke 1:78-79

Debbie Foster

Hymn 134

“Joy to the World” (verse 1 & 4)

Nazareth Presbyterian

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.*

Postlude

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Limestone Presbyterian

ⁱ Feasting on the Word: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1 Advent through Pentecost, page 23

ⁱⁱ Feasting on the Word: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 1 Advent through Pentecost, page 31, slightly adapted.