

Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian USA)
Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ 18 December 2022 ~ Order for Worship

Preparation for Worship:
"Love is the whole thing. We are only pieces."
~Rumi

Prelude

What Child Is This?

David Schelat

Introit

Silent Night

Michela Robbins, Bea Watterson, William Thomas, Helen Carter

Call to Worship:

Leader: Good Shepherd, hear our prayers and deliver your people.

People: Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Leader: Feed us with your mercy and grant us your peace.

People: Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Leader: Mighty and merciful God, we rejoice and give thanks that you look upon us with favor and bless us with grace. Transform this weary world according to your promise—giving power to the weak, justice to the oppressed, and food to the hungry, so that all may sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Litany for Advent:

O Emmanuel, our Sovereign and lawgiver, desire of the nations and Savior of all:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Come, Lord Jesus.

God of all generations, though signs and seasons change, your promise is faithful and your word will never pass away. Give us courage and strength as we watch and wait for Jesus Christ, our redeemer, who is coming in glory to reign.

Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candles:

Leader: On this fourth Sunday in Advent, we light the candle of love. The Lord will give you a sign.
Look, the young woman is with child.

People: She shall bear a son and name him Emmanuel: "God is with us."

***Hymn 118**

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

- 1) *While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground
The angel of the Lord came down and glory shone around, and glory shone around.*
- 2) *"Fear not", said he, for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and humankind, to you and humankind."*
- 3) *"To you, in David's town this day is born of David's line
The Savior who is Christ the Lord, and this shall be the sign, and this shall be the sign."*
- 4) *"The heavenly Babe you there shall find to human view displayed
All humbly wrapped in swathing bands and in a manger laid, and in a manger laid."*
- 5) *Thus spoke the seraph, and forthwith appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song, addressed their joyous song:*
- 6) *"All glory be to God on high and on the earth be peace
Goodwill to all from highest heaven begin and never cease, begin and never cease."*

Call to Prayer

There is a voice crying out in the wilderness of sin. God is calling to us with love. Let us confess our sin, trusting in God's saving grace.

Prayer of Confession:

We confess, O God, that we are not prepared to welcome your way of righteousness, justice, and peace. You call us to repentance, but we refuse to change our ways. You call us to resist oppression, but we resign ourselves to evil. You call us to be reconciled, but we remain divided and afraid. Forgive us, God of grace. Pour out your Spirit in our lives so that we may be forgiven, set free, and made ready to meet you at the coming of your holy realm; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[Silent prayers]

Words of Assurance

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain made low, and the crooked made straight, and the rough made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. This is the good news we are waiting for: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Response: Gloria** *Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

***The Peace** *Please practice **contact-free** passing of the peace!*

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

Time with the Children *Instead of our regular children's sermon, the Cherub Choir will lead our worship in song.*

Cherub Choir *The Snow Lay on the Ground* Venite Adoremus

Prayer for Illumination

Speak to us this day, O Lord. Visit us with your wisdom, overshadow us with your Spirit, and let it be with us according to your Word: Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

First Scripture Reading Isaiah 7:10-16

Hymn 129 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

1) *Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!*

Of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.

It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

2) *Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;*

with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.

To show God's love aright, she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

3) *This Flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,*

Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.

Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death He saves us, and lightens every load.

Second Scripture Reading Matthew 1:18-25

Response *Good King Wenceslas* Tempus Adest Floridum
"Bower Hill Phil" Clarinet Trio: Abigail Boisvert, Autumn Grella, Addie Ivey

Sermon **"The Thing about Love"** Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder

Pastoral Prayer and 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 forever. Amen.

Welcome and Next Steps

Invitation to Offering

Offertory Anthem *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*

"The Bower Hill Phil" String Ensemble ~ Violin: Michela Robbins, Lily Philson, Henry Carter, Leah Smith, Bea Watterson
Cello: Helen Carter, William Thomas, Clairra McElroy, Gus Watterson

***Response: The Doxology** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* Old Hundredth
Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God all creatures here below!

Praise God above, ye heavenly host! Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Closing Hymn 146**

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

- 1) *Gentle Mary laid her Child lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger:
Such a Babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.*
- 2) *Angels sang about his birth; wise men sought and found him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him:
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.*
- 3) *Gentle Mary laid her Child lowly in a manger;
He is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger:
Son of God, of humble birth, beautiful the story;
Praise his name in all the earth, hail the King of glory!*

***Charge and Benediction**

***Extroit**

*Angels We Have Heard on High
Michela Robbins, Bea Watterson, Helen Carter, William Thomas*

Postlude

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers *Paul Manz*
Feel free to exit during the postlude, but please be mindful of those who wish to stay and listen.

A special "thank you" to Ellena Gibbs, Bethany Gibbs, Rich Salvante, and Jason Robosky for their generous help with our young musicians!