A Service of Lessons & Carols

Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist

Sunday, December 17, 2023

Church of the Good Shepherd Chancel Choir

Prelude: O Come, All Ye Faithful & Angels We Have Heard on High - CGS String Quartet

The Chimes

Introit: O Come, O Come Emmanuel - Chancel Choir

Words of Welcome & Passing the Peace - Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin

Call to Worship

Beloved in Christ, in this season of Advent, let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, to see the Babe lying in a manger. Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by his holy Child; and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this country and within this city. And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless; the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children. Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one. This prayer and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is this kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Advent Wreath Lighting of the Joy Candle - Sandy and Lauren Jelinek

***Hymn:** Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence, arr. Chad Fothergill - Congregation and Chancel Choir

Let all mortal flesh keep silence
And with fear and trembling stannd;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descending
Comes full homage to demand

Verses 2 & 3 sung by choir

At his feet the six-winged seraph
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence
As with ceaseless voice they cry
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia Lord most high!

Advent Reflection: A Fierce Joy - Rev. Eva Thai-Erwin

First Lesson: Isaiah 40: 1 – 8 - *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol: Jesus Christ the Apple Tree - Elizabeth Poston
Sophia Thompson, soloist

The tree of life my soul hath seen
Laden with fruit and always green
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree

His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne're can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree

For happiness I long have sought
And pleasure dearly I have bought
I missed of all but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree

I'm weary of my former toil,
Here I will sit and rest a while:
Under the shadow I will be,
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree

Second Lesson: Isaiah 9: 2, 6–7 - *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol: Brightest and Best, arr. Shawn Kirchner

Hail the bless'd morn, see the great mediator
Down from the regions of glory descend
Shepherds go worship the babe in the manger,
Lo, for his guard the bright angels attend

Refrain:
Brightest and best are the stars of the morning
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid
Star in the east the horizon adorning
Guide where our infant redeemer is laid

Cold on his cradle the dew drops are shining
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall
Angels adore him in slumber reclining
Maker and monarch and savior of all

Shall we not yield him in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom and off'rings divine
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean
Myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?

Third Lesson: Zechariah 9: 9 – 10 - *Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

*__Congregational Hymn:__ Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates - Red Hymnal #213

Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 35: 1 – 6 - *The desert and the parched land will be glad …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol: Winds Through the Olive Trees - Linda Kachelmeir
Sue Holder, Abbey Miller, Carolyn Noonchester, soloists

Winds through the olive trees softly did blow
'round little Bethlehem, long ago.
Sheep on the hillside lay whiter than snow
Shepherds were watching them, long, long ago

Then from the happy skies, angels bent low
Singing their songs of joy: long, long ago.
For in a manger bed, cradled we know
Christ came to Bethlehem, long, long ago.

Fifth Lesson: Luke 1:26 – 35 - *In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol: My Lord, He is a Comin' Soon - Laura Winnen

My Lord, he is a comin' soon,
Prepare the way of the Lord
Get everything ready for that day,
Prepare the way of the Lord

Come, Lord Jesus, come into my heart:
Prepare the way of the King!
He is coming,, he's coming soon
Prepare the way of the King!

If you're asleep, it's time to wake up.
Awake, O sleeper, the King!
If you're in the dark, it's time to be lit
Awake, O sleeper, arise!

Sixth Lesson: Matthew 2: 1 – 12 - *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Invitation for Trek to the Tree

*__Congregational Hymn__: O Come, All Ye Faithful - Red Hymnal #234

Seventh Lesson: John 1: 1 – 5, 9 – 12 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God …*
The word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol: The Glory of the Father - Egil Hovland, arr. Pooler

The word was made flesh
And dwelt among us
We beheld the glory of the Father
Full of grace and truth

In the beginning was the word
The word was with God
In Him was life
And the life was the light of men
He came to his own
And his own received him not

Reading and Prayer

Brothers and sisters, we celebrate at this time the solemn season of Advent in which the Church bids us to prepare and celebrate the coming of Christ; a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem; a coming that we experience in the gift of his Spirit, in the bread of the Eucharist, in the joy of human lives that are shared; a coming we wait for when God gathers up all things in Christ. Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ who brings light to the world. Let us leave behind the darkness of sin, walk in the light that shines on our path, and renew within ourselves the hope of glory to which he beckons us. And as we turn towards the light, let us have on our hearts all those who see no light, for whom all is darkness and despair. Let us pray that they too may be illumined by Christ who is our light.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty,
we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Announcements

***Benediction**

Go now and walk in the light of the Lord.
Stay alert for the Lord is near.
Put on the armor of light
and live openly and honorably.
Pray for peace for all God's people.
And may God clothe you in the light of Christ;
May Christ Jesus teach you his ways;
And may the Holy Spirit keep you alert and prepared
for the coming day of the Lord.
We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. **Amen.**

***Benediction Response**: Peace, Peace/Silent Night

Peace, peace, peace on earth
And good will to all
This is the time for your joy
This is the time for love
Now let us all sing together
Of peace on earth

Silent Night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon' virgin mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Postlude: Hark The Herald Angels Sing & Joy to the World - CGS String Quartet

CGS String Quartet

Elizabeth Hedman, violin
Sharon Harman, violin
Carrie Holzman-Little, viola
Dane Little, cello

Special Thanks

This program is being supported by the Howard and Fran Syverson Music Fund. We are thankful for their faithfulness and generosity to the church's music program.