

THOSE
WHO *are*
not alone
DREAM

4TH sunday in Advent

Prelude

On This Day Earth Shall Ring
arr. by Cathy Moglebust

Welcome

Call to Worship

I thought I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of a child,
Suddenly, joy was overflowing.

I thought I knew love, but when your hand was in mine,
Suddenly, love was overflowing.

I thought I knew God, but when you showed me grace,
when you forgave me,
when you loved me,
when you raised me,
Suddenly, God was overflowing.

So, let us worship Holy God together
as a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.

This is community.

This is the body of Christ.

Welcome home.

Lighting of the Fourth Candle: Love

May this light burn bright as a reminder that God is here and God is love.

May this light be our invitation to be Advent people – people who dream.

The Single Family

Hymn # 147

The First Nowell

Prayer of Confession

God of Good News,

You tell us that we are highly favored,

but we struggle to believe this.

You encourage us not to be afraid,

but we speak and act out of fear.

You assure us that the impossible is possible,

but hope slips through our hands,

and your dreams seem like fantasies.

So today we pray:

Teach us to sing like Mary.

Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth.

Teach us to trust like the angels.

Forgive us when we fail to dream as you do. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

The good news of Advent is that Christ came into the world that we might have joy:

the joy that comes from hearts transformed by love.

Hear the invitation to true joy: in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Response

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

Children's Message

Ministry Updates

Giving and Receiving of Tithes and Offerings

Hymn # 121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God,
you have never ceased speaking with us:
blowing in the winds, in strains of music, leaping in wombs.
You have always found a way to show up in our midst,
especially on our fearful and lonely days.
Today as we open your Scriptures,
seeing once more these treasured pages,
we ask that you speak to us again.
Stir our hearts.
Speak with us.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit.
And if we are not able to hear your Word clearly,
then give us Elizabeths,
who will point out your presence in delight and joy.
Speak to us. We are listening. Amen.

Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11
God's Covenant with David

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders^[a] of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel,

saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, "from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.

Special Music

Gesu Bambino
Pietro Yon

Prayers of the People & 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.**

Hymn # 136

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:26-45
Nothing will be impossible with God

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How

can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Sermon

"Nothing Impossible"

Rev. Caroline Cupp

Affirmation of Faith

We know this world is hard,
and harder than it has to be.
When the world falls apart around us,
we believe in listening for the angels that say,
"Do not be afraid,"
and in seeking out the Elizabeths in our lives:
those who laugh with joy at our arrival,
throwing open the doors of their hearts.
We believe that healthy relationships are a sign of your healing,
the joy of family born and chosen,
homes founded in life-giving partnership.

We believe in church families,
in chosen families,
and in the love that extends beyond family.
We believe in friendships,
in neighbors,
and in leaning on one another in difficult times.

We believe in the Triune God:
Lover, Beloved, and Love itself,
Relational, connected, and never alone.

We believe that same belovedness exists for us:
we are loved and claimed,
never alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Blessing and Response

Postlude

Improvisation on Angels We Have Heard on High

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST PRES

Leading us in worship today are Rev. Bob Sheldon, Interim Pastor; Rev. Caroline Cupp, Executive Pastor; Sandor Kadar, Director of Music; Kira Boros, Choir Accompanist; Lyndsay Varsaci, soprano; The Chancel Ringers

This service was adapted from a liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Our prayers and sympathy are with Mary, Evan, Knox and Ella Hambleton in the death of Mary's grandmother.

December Anti-Racism Conversation – This month’s session will take place **today** from noon – 1 pm over Zoom. We will consider if voter rights is a theological issue and learn more about voting rights through grace-full listening and conversation. All are invited to join and feel free to invite a friend or family member. The Zoom link to join the conversation was sent in last Wednesday’s e-weekly email and is also available at <https://www.firstpreswc.com/racial-justice>. Contact Sara Pantazes with any questions.

New Upper Room books available - Copies of the January/February Upper Room devotion books are now available. They are in a box in front of the church by the door near the receptionist's office. Please stop by church anytime to pick up your copy or contact Elizabeth Hess if you prefer to have one mailed to your home.



The above shows the giving amount as of 12/16/2020 compared to the 2020 full year goal as well as the 2021 pledges so far. These charts will be presented each week to keep the congregation well-informed of our progress. Further details can be found on the Financial Reporting page on our website.

Poinsettias – 2020

Given By:

Adams, Barbara & George

Adams, Sue
Alderfer, Rebecca &
Karen Whelan and Family
Bice, Jill

Blankley, Richard and Mary Ellen

Classen, Louise
Congdon-Martin, Doug & Elizabeth
Dickey, Ann & David
Eck, Betsy & Scott
Endslow, Ellen
Ferdik, Nancy & Family
Galloway, Peter
Haag, Phil
Haag, Barb
Hambleton Family

Kile, John and Susan
Lidle, Barbara & Amy
Mahaffey, Patricia Houser
McCarter, Jacqueline
Murray, Joan
Norton, Evelyn
Single, Craig, Liz, Andrew & Daniel
Stone, David & Judy
Threlkeld, Kathy & Family
Turner, Erinn
Westhafer, Dennis & Kathy
Whiteman, Faye and Family
Zumbano, George and Gerri

In Memory of:

Our Parents, George & Donna Mae Nutt & Helen &
Bob Kerr; Mrs. Nancy Lyle
Floss and Jack Herman
Harold and Shirley Alderfer

Archie Bice: Father to Brandon Bice, Father-in-law to
Jill Bice and Grandfather to Ella, Cody & Tara Bice
Aura W. & George H. Blankley, Jr.,
Margaret G. & Melvin O. Rockefeller
My Mother, Jeanne Luther
Loved Ones
Kaia Allesia Dickey
Our son, Timothy
Harriet M. Endslow, Mother
Jilda Arzarelli
Loved Ones
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Haag
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene H. Wheeler
Uncle Brian Hambleton; Connye Fleming,
Joanne Beckman, Julie Mars
Parents
Donald C. Lidle
Jim and Sally Houser
Tom McCarter, Sr.
Loving Husband, Bill
Anne & O. C. Norton (Parents)
David A. Single
Parents, Gene & Ruth Stone, Jack & Kay LaBarre
Jerry Threlkeld
Nana, Grandad, Nan
Loved ones
George Whiteman
All those that we have lost from Covid 19

Given By

Adams, Barbara & George

Bird, Bob and Kathy

Bragg, Suzanne & Tom

Chew, Janet & Al

Dickey, Dave and Ann

Heaver, Phil & Gwyn

Stone, David & Judy

In Honor of:

Our Grandchildren - Chelsey, Michael, Kaitlyn, Gabriel,
Courtney, Seth, Lilly, Olivia

Our Dedicated Church Staff

Our 5 Grandchildren

Our Amazing Grandchildren, Gabrielle, Tanner, Jimmy, Charlie

Sloane Ann & Cameryn Ruth McDivitt

Harold Freeman on his 101st birthday

Children & Grandchildren - Sarah, Karen, Brian, Gregg, Bennett, Aven

Special thanks to all those who helped decorate for this Christmas