



Zion Goshert's United Church of Christ

Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 20, 2020

Pastor: Bruce Farrell
Ministers: All the Faithful Members

1588 Mount Zion Road, Lebanon, PA 17046 717-865-3286 www.ziongosherts.org

*Please stand if you are able. Congregation, please speak the words in **bold**.

PRELUDE

Tara Zimmerman

WELCOME

The ringing of the bell to call us to worship

*CALL TO WORSHIP

[Today's text]

People: Darkness has come upon us. Fear and anxiety seek to claim us. Where do we go for help?

Pastor: Lift up your hearts, people of God. Share our joy as we prepare, not just our houses and food, but our hearts and minds for God's Advent among us.

People: We praise You Lord God. You have come and redeemed us through the salvation of Jesus Christ, Your Son.

Pastor: Be filled with awe and the Holy Spirit and talk about all these things.

People: You are full of tender mercies and remember Your promises.

Pastor: Prepare the way – shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death.

People: Jesus enables us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness all our days, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

Pastor: The Lord is coming! The Lord is coming! O come let us adore Him.

*HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory

**¹ Angels from the realms of glory wing your flight o'er all the earth.
You who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth: [Refrain]**

Refrain: Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

**² Shepherds in the field abiding watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light: [Refrain]**

**³ Sages leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar.
Seek the great Desire of nations; you have seen the natal star: [Refrain]**

**⁴ All creation join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son.
Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One: [Refrain]**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: Love

Lighting a candle is a simple yet profound act. [*Light first three candles.*] It is a testimony to the power of light over darkness. On our journey to Christmas, the fourth candle symbolizes love. We rest in our loving Savior, Who came once as a baby to save the world and Who will return in glory. In the words of Zephaniah, "The Lord your God is with You, the Mighty Warrior Who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

How do we know that Jesus came in love? "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (John 15:9, 13; Romans 5:8).

And what does this mean for us? Jesus told his disciples: "A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another. We love because He first loved us" (John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:19).

[*Light the fourth candle.*] Jesus Christ is the true reason for hope, peace, joy, and love in this season and forever.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: First Words

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:57-80

CONFESSION

Call to Confession

[Luke 1:76b-78a]

You will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God.

Confession

Pastor: We forget Your character: You save and rescue us and are full of tender mercy, a keeper of promises, a forgiver of sins. You come to live in and among us. You don't just ask us to serve You but enable us to do so.

People: We are quick to call our negative actions and thoughts 'mistakes, unintentionally made', not sins.

Pastor: Our knowledge is lacking, thinking we can do the impossible: forgive ourselves. But we need God's forgiveness.

People: We do not speak in awe, praising Your Name and sharing our joy at Your presence in our world.

Pastor: We resist the filling of the Holy Spirit and have fear when we serve You.

All: We don't shine on those living in darkness and the shadow of death, guiding them into the path of peace, preparing them for You.

Assurance of Pardon

[Luke 1, Malachi 3:2, Philippians 1:6]

The Lord is merciful and forgiving, a great and compassionate Savior Who rescues us from darkness and frees us from fear. Like a refiner's fire, the Lord makes us shine with the brilliance of the purest gold and silver. The One who began this work in us seeks to bring it to completion.

SONG

O Come, Let us Adore Him

1 O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

2 For You alone are worthy. For You alone are worthy. For You alone are worthy, Christ the Lord.

3 Let's praise His name together. Let's praise His name together. Let's praise His name together, Christ the Lord.

4 We'll give You all the glory. We'll give You all the glory. We'll give You all the glory, Christ the Lord.

SERMON: Zechariah Speaks

ANTHEM

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
Roberto Marti

GOD'S WORD ON GIVING

[from Luke 1:76-79]

You will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God... to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

PRAYERS for the people and pastoral prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your Name.

Your kingdom come; Your 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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

*HYMN

Come and Hear the Joyful Singing

Tune: *Deck the Halls*

1 Come and hear the joyful singing. Alleluia, gloria. Set the bells of heaven ringing. Alleluia, gloria. God the Lord has shown us favor. Alleluia, gloria. Christ is born to be our Savior. Alleluia, gloria!

2 Angels of His birth are telling: Alleluia, gloria. Prince of Peace all powers excelling: Alleluia, gloria. Death and hell cannot defeat Him. Alleluia, gloria. Go to Bethlehem and greet Him. Alleluia, gloria!

3 Choir and people, shout in wonder: Alleluia, gloria. Let the merry organ thunder: Alleluia, gloria. Thank our God for love amazing. Alleluia, gloria. Father, Son and Spirit praising: Alleluia, gloria!

BENEDICTION

NOTES ON PARISH LIFE

POSTLUDE

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come to His people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a horn of salvation for us ... salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us
– to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember His holy covenant... to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
Luke 1:68-69, 71-72, 74-75

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