



Salem Mennonite Church

A Congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

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December 1, 2024 – Advent 1

I. GOD CALLS US INTO PRAISE

Prelude

“In the Bleak mid-winter” – Innes
“And the Glory of the Lord” – Handel

Choral Call to Worship

“In Dulci Jubilo” – Crocker
Translation: In sweet rejoicing now sing and be glad.

Call to Worship

Leader: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

People: The Lord saves us from our enemies, to show the mercy promised to our ancestors. God remembers his holy covenant that he swore to our forefather Abraham, to grant that we may be delivered and serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Invocation, Greeting and Welcoming Each Other

Opening Hymn

“Hail to the Lord’s Anointed” – HWB #185

Confession of Sin (from Malachi 4)

Leader: The LORD of hosts says, Behold, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. Behold, the day approaches, burning like an oven, when all arrogant evildoers will be stubble, that coming day shall burn and blaze, says the LORD of hosts, and it will leave them neither root nor branch.

People: O Lord, we forget your commandments and instruction. Turn us and return us to you, O Lord. Turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents. Turn us to your ways, so that when you come, our land is not struck with consuming judgment.

Leader: The wicked will become ash, but for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings, and you shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

II. HEARING JESUS, THE LIVING WORD

Anthem

"Only a Baby Came" – Sleeth

Scripture Readings

Judges 13:2-24
Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 (dramatic reading)

Sermon

"Questions of Doubt and Hope"

III. RECEIVING THE SPIRIT, JOINED IN CHRIST'S BODY

Hymn of Response

"Bles'd be the God of Israel"

Announcements and Offerings

- Today's **Worship offering**: Harvest Thank
- Today's **Sunday school offering**: Salem Sunday School
- **Children's Offering**: Bethany Food Pantry

Congregational Sharing & Prayer

Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving

Sharing of Bread and Cup from the Lord's Table

IV. RETURNING TO GOD'S SERVICE AS NEW CREATURES

Closing Hymn

"To Us a Child of Hope" – HWB #189

Benediction

The Lord go with you and keep you in his path, to carry knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of sins. Give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, like a sunrise of tender mercy from God, and may God guide our feet into the way of peace.

Postlude

"From Heaven Above" – Young

Greeters: Linda Graber & Vernetta Waltner; **Worship Leader:** Cheryle Gering; **Musicians:** Sharla Unruh (organist), Ladies' Ensemble (special music), Heather Haggerty (accompanist); **Lighters:** Greg & Cindi Mutchelknaus; **Speaker:** Pastor Spencer; **Coffee:** Conference Room Class

THE CHURCH AT WORK

TODAY

We welcome all who are worshiping with us this morning! Coffee is available in the fellowship hall following the worship service.

There will be a potluck meal followed by Annual Meeting.

THIS WEEK

Tues. (3rd), 7:00 p.m. – Christian Formation Meeting

Monthly Day of Prayer & Fasting, **7:30 p.m.** – Prayer Meeting

Wed. (4th), 6:30 p.m. – Handbells; **7:30 p.m.** – Chancel Choir

8:30 p.m. – Men's Choir

NEXT SUNDAY, December 8, Advent 2

Speaker: Pastor Spencer; **Worship Leader:** Everett Waltner; **Musicians:** Heather Haggerty (organist), Men's Choir (special music); **Greeters:** Linda Graber & Vernetta Waltner; **Candle Lighters:** Ray and Alison Neufeld; **Coffee:** Conference Room Class; **Scripture:** 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Zechariah 8:11-17; Luke 3:1-14

Worship Offering: Wellspring Wholistic Care Center

Sunday School Offering: Members in Mission

Children's Offering: Bethany Food Pantry

4:00 p.m. – Final Bible Study

COMING EVENTS

December 11 – Deacon Board Meeting

December 24 – Children's Christmas Program, Choirs Program

SOUTH CHURCH NEWS & NOTES

If you would like to donate a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one during this holiday season, please contact Cheryl at 925-4204.

The Mission and Service Team is sponsoring the holiday Senior Giving Tree for residents of Oakview Terrace and Assisted Living. Trees with gift tags and instructions will be located at Jamboree Foods, Norm's Thrifty White and our church narthex. Gifts must be returned by December 15 to ensure Christmas delivery. Monetary donations to cover expenses are welcome, and can be given to Lee Brockmueller, earmarked "Senior Giving Tree". Thank you!

A donation match has been offered to the congregation for donations directed at Family First Uganda. This match is up to \$1500 of total donations received through Dec. 15th. If you would like to give, please make your check out to Salem Mennonite Church and notate that the money is for Family First Uganda and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church.

COMMUNITY & BEYOND

The Freeman Network for Justice and Peace will meet Wednesday, December 11 at 11:30 A.M. in the Freeman Public Library. All are welcome.

Yule love this! Join us for a live, online event on December 3, at 11:00 AM CST/10:00 AM MST as we take you behind the scenes of MCC's Christmas Giving Guide. Discover the impact behind each gift and how your generosity makes a difference. Learn more and register to join this event at mcc.org/yule-love-this

For the second year in a row, Heritage Hall Museum & Archives is inviting the public to a free community Christmas Carol Sing-Along. It will start at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Bethel Church on the museum grounds. The church, decorated for the season, will be open free to the public prior to the carol sing-along starting at 10 a.m.; light refreshments will be served. "Christmas at the Bethel Church" will continue through December. The historical church features 14 decorated trees sponsored by community businesses, families and organizations. The church will be open to museum guests, as well as those making a \$10 purchase at the HHM&A Mercantile or by donation. Passes are available at the museum. In addition to the Dec. 7 event, the museum is also extending its regular hours – noon to 4 weekdays – to include Saturdays, Dec. 14 and 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have questions or want to schedule an event of your own at the church – a Sunday school class, youth group or family, etc. – please call us at 605-925-7545.

Sunday Morning Worship – 9:30am/ Sunday School – Following Worship
Amy Waltner, Administrative Assistant (southchurch@goldenwest.net) 925-4553
Spencer Bradford, Pastor 919-808-2024/spencerbradford42@gmail.com

THE COMMUNION OF THANKSGIVING

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. We come in grateful celebration of Jesus' cross and resurrection, giving from our receiving, inviting as we have been invited, serving as we are served, renewing our bond to the narrow way of Jesus. There is room at his table for all who follow Jesus in God's covenant of grace and obedience.

The Lord is God, compassionate and gracious, overflowing in loving mercy and steadfast kindness. Blessed be God, now and forever!

As the grain once scattered in the fields and the grapes once dispersed on the hills are now united on this table in bread and drink, so Lord, may we be made a true community of your Spirit as your Body on earth, and may your whole people soon be gathered together from across the earth in your Kingdom of holy peace.

Come, Lord Jesus! To you be glory forever!

Let us raise our hearts, and give thanks to the Lord our God.

We raise up our thanks and praise to the Lord, because he is good; his love is eternal.

Truly, it is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to offer our praise, worship, and thanksgiving to you, Almighty and Ever-living God. You created all things out of sheer grace for your glory, you send redemption from slavery and sin when we reject your grace, and you call us into obedient love through your law, prophets, and apostles. So we sing,

Blessed be the Lord God, holy and mighty!

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, our king and redeemer, sent into our world to fulfill your promises, to satisfy our yearnings for hope, to bring freedom to captives, healing for the broken, and light to the nations. You sent him as a servant among the poor, sharing human suffering, to be your presence among us, Emmanuel. In the fullness of time, in humble obedience, he came in a manger and left on a cross, and we rejoice that in his death and resurrection, you set before us the sure promise of reconciliation, signs of new life in freedom from sin and death, the work of your Spirit in his Body, and the certain hope of his return in your full kingdom.

Blessed are you, Creator Spirit, who makes all things new!

Come, Spirit of Christ, and fulfill the promise of your kingdom among us. For on the night that he was betrayed, during supper, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying: "Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So in praise and thanksgiving, we offer to you ourselves and all these gifts, that we may be a holy and living sacrifice, dedicated to your service, in union with Christ's saving self offering for us and the whole world.

We praise you, we bless you, we worship and thank you, O Lord our God.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this communion, on us gathered here and on these gifts, that the sharing of this bread and cup may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Sanctify and fill us with your true presence, that in all our lives we may be for the world the Body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. As we share your presence anew at this table of your giving, let us share your presence with the world in the giving of our lives and selves, in your service for all people. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one in fellowship with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until we feast together at your heavenly table with all your saints, when all your promises become presence. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

AMEN.