

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 20, 2020

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome and Announcements

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Prelude

African-American Spiritual
Felix Mendelssohn
Arr. James D. Kimball

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"
"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Handbell Quintet
Susie Bossert, Nancy Deison, Sue Jones,
Janice Smith, Linda Young

Call to Worship (Responsive)

I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my
child,

suddenly, joy was overflowing.

I knew love, but when you held my hand,

suddenly, love was overflowing.

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 Advent Wreath

On week 1 of Advent we lit the candle of hope, being reminded that those who keep awake, those who dream, are people who hope.

(Light the candle of hope)

On week 2 we lit the candle of peace, the candle that reminds us that as people who dream, those who prepare the way, there is a way that does not include fear, conflict, pain, but instead is a way of peace.

(Light the candle of peace)

On Week 3 we lit the candle of joy as a reminder that God's dream for this world involves the end of all tears. God's dream for this world involves a joy that overflows and is contagious.

(Light candle of joy)

Today, as we draw near to Christmas day, we light the candle of love. May this light burn bright as a reminder that God is here and God is love.

(Light candle of love)

We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Hymn 107

107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn-ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is
el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and
world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and
win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by
near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the
free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break
light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens
bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der
forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be
love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heaven-ly door and lives now in-side us for - ev - er.
of his an - thems rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.
raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/ Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

Call to Confession

Let us confess our sins to the One whose mercy endures from generation to generation.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

God of Good News, You say to me, "You are highly favored," but I struggle to see how that could be. You say to me, "Do not be afraid," but I am afraid all the time. You say to me, "Even the impossible is possible, just look at Elizabeth!" But hope slips through my hands like water. The impossible still feels impossible. So today I pray, 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 can only do one at a time, or none at all.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Siblings, by the faith of Christ, your sins are forgiven. Blessed be the God of our salvation, whose mercy is everlasting.

Prayer of Illumination

Holy God, Before you could speak, you were speaking—leaping in wombs, kicking, stretching, jumping for joy. You have always found a way to show up in our midst, Particularly on our fearful or lonely days. So today, as we crack open our Bibles, fluttering through these old beloved pages, We ask that you would move again. Stir in us. Speak to us. Fill us with the 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. Before you could speak, you were speaking, So here and now, Creator God, we are listening. Amen.

First Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

The word of God for the people of God
Thanks be to God

Music Ministry

Michael Bedford

“Comfort, Comfort Ye My People”
Sanctuary Choir 2004

Comfort, Comfort ye my people,
speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning
‘neath their sorrows’ load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace
that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover,
and her warfare now is over.

Hark, the voice of one
that crieth in the desert far and near,
Calling us to new repentance
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God away;
Let the valleys rise to meet Him
and the hills bow down to greet Him.

Make ye straight what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits His holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now o’er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token
that the Word is never broken.

Second Reading

Luke 1:26-45

The word of God for the people of God
Thanks be to God

Hymn 98

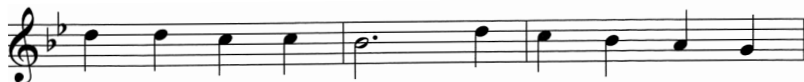
98 To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary



1 To a maid whose name was Mar - y, the an - gel Ga - briel
 2 "For you are high - ly fa - vored by God the Lord of
 3 But Mar - y was most trou - bled to hear the an - gel's
 4 "Fear not, for God is with you, and you shall bear a
 5 "How shall this be?" said Mar - y, "I am not yet a
 6 As Mar - y heard the an - gel, she won - dered at his



came. "Fear not," the an - gel told her, "I
 all, who e - ven now is with you. You
 word. What was the an - gel say - ing? It
 child. His name shall be called Je - sus, God's
 wife." The an - gel an - swered quick - ly, "The
 words. "Be - hold, I am your hand - maid," she



come to bring good news; good news I come to
 are on earth most blest; you are most blest, most
 trou - bled her to hear, to hear the an - gel's
 off - spring from on high. And he shall reign for -
 power of the Most High will come up - on you
 said un - to her God. "So be it; I am



tell you, good news, I say, good news."
 bless - ed; God chose you, you are blest!"
 mes - sage, it trou - bled her to hear.
 ev - er, for - ev - er reign on high."
 short - ly, your child shall be God's child."
 read - y ac - cord - ing to your word."

This 20th-century ballad-like retelling of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) displays many characteristics of a folksong style, especially repetition in both text and tune and short quotations included in the narrative. Such features help to make a song both memorable and singable.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God.

We believe that God has dreams for humanity.

We believe in the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Spirit comforts us when our dreams turn to nightmares.

We believe in Jesus.

We believe that Jesus walked this world to wake us up, inviting us to be the church in the world.

We believe in dreams.

We believe in the power that dreams have to show us a new way.

So, in this Advent season,

We are those who dream and those who wake up. Let it be so. Amen.

Prayers for the People 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.

Call to Stewardship

Joining Mary's joyful song, our souls proclaim the greatness of the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. With humble and grateful hearts, let us bring our offerings to God.

Offertory

Arr. Dale Wood

"Carol of the Manger"

Congregational Response Hymn 606 Old Hundredth

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Offertory Prayer

Holy God, your love is magnified in the gift of your Son, whom you so freely share with us. Bless these gifts that we offer to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry in your coming reign of justice and peace; in Christ's name. Amen.

Hymn 275

275 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a bul - wark nev - er
2 Did we in our own strength con - fide, our striv - ing would be
3 And though this world, with dev - ils filled, should threat - en to un -
4 That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, no thanks to them, a -



fail - ing. Our help - er he, a - mid the flood of
los - ing, were not the right man on our side, the
do us, we will not fear, for God hath willed his
bid - eth. The Spir - it and the gifts are ours through



mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing. For still our an - cient foe doth
man of God's own choos - ing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ
truth to tri - umph through us. The Prince of Dark - ness grim, we
him who with us sid - eth. Let goods and kin - dred go, this



seek to work us woe. His craft and power are great, and
Je - sus, it is he. Lord Sab - a - oth his name, from
trem - ble not for him. His rage we can en - dure, for
mor - tal life al - so. The bod - y they may kill; God's



armed with cru - el hate, on earth is not his e - qual.
age to age the same, and he must win the bat - tle.
lo, his doom is sure. One lit - tle word shall fell him.
truth a - bid - eth still. His king - dom is for - ev - er.

Long before Isaac Watts began to Christianize the Psalms, Martin Luther had already done so when he created the text and tune for this, his most famous hymn, which is based on Psalm 46. Luther encouraged metrical versions of psalms as well as chanted psalms and new hymns.

TEXT: Martin Luther, 1529; trans. Frederick Henry Hedge, 1852
MUSIC: Martin Luther, 1529, alt.

EIN' FESTE BURG
8.7.8.7.6.6.6.7

Benediction

The Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you
And also with you

Postlude

G.F. Handel

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flock”

Liturgy taken from Sanctified Art Those Who Dream: for Advent – Epiphany
Year B, Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC |
sanctifiedart.org and Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion,
Year B, Volume 1.