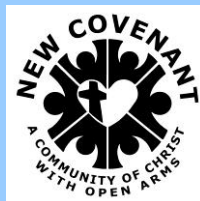




New Covenant Presbyterian Church

December 19, 2021

Worship Service



1125 Jamison Corner Rd., Middletown, DE 19709

(302) 378-4446 www.newcov-church.org

The Worship of God

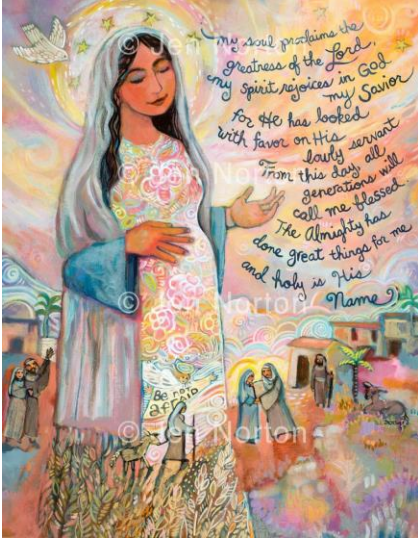
4th Sunday of Advent

Welcome and Announcements

Lay Leader: Jane Adams

Sharing of Our Vision

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Musical Prelude....



Today we focus on Mary's song which is known as the Magnificat. Her song resonates with individuals who identify with her lowliness. Their hearts long to sing the Magnificat's liberating praise. And yet, institutional religion can tend to nurture problematic habits, and congregations can harbor the proud, the powerful and the rich. But Mary declares that we are to be in the business of inspiring the spirit to rejoice in God – and we are to equip souls to magnify God.

One of the ways we can do this is by looking on the lowly with love and compassion. Just consider: How can a soul magnify God when our collective gaze notices only those whom the powers and principalities of this world prefer us to see? The Magnificat points to our prideful hearts as ground zero of this epidemic, and Mary's song echoes the promise that God remembers the lowly with mercy. Never forget that God's church also needs to remember the lowly and look on them with favor.

Preparing to Meet God

Introit

Silent Night

The Bell Choir

Call to Worship

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Wreath Lighters: The Urbans



L: Today we light the candle of JOY. We are told that the magi, when they saw the star over the place where Jesus was, "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

P: *May the light of Christ bring us joy.*

L: This candle symbolizes the joy Christ's light brings us.

P: *The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing... They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. (Is. 35: 1-2)*

L: Let us pray. O God, turn our days to joy that we may serve you always. Fill us with a sense of expectancy and wonder, as we continue to prepare for the amazing blessings of the holy birth. Amen.

Response

He Came Down

*He came down that we may have joy. He came down that we may have joy.
He came down that we may have joy. Hallelujah forevermore.*

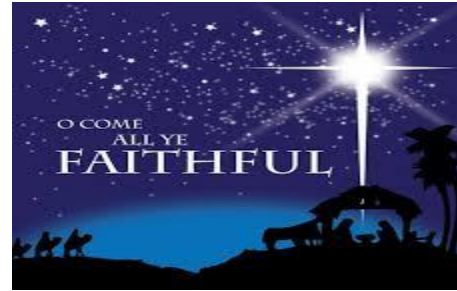
Hymn of PraiseO Come, All Ye Faithful*

41

1-O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

2-Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

3-Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

**Prayer of Confession**

Holy God, in this season of anticipation, the voices of merchants and advertisers compete for our attention, drowning out your voice. We busy ourselves with tasks we think we're supposed to do, and neglect those things you actually call us to do. And when we DO obediently answer your call, we do it begrudgingly and without joy. We lack the generous spirit of Mary, who heard your call and offered herself in service to you, without question. Instead of feeling put upon, she lifted her voice in a song of honor and wonder. And so we ask that you would fill our hearts with joy and song, so that others see in us the grace and mercy you have given us through your Son. Instill in us a spirit of gratitude and prepare our hearts to receive the most precious of gifts this Christmas. And now, holy God, we turn to you in silent prayer to share our concerns and to seek your forgiveness.....Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

L: Friends, hear the Good News: Know this and believe it in your hearts -

P: ***As we wait for the birth of the baby Jesus, and for the return of our Savior,***

L: We are already forgiven through God's grace.

P: ***Thanks be to God!***

Meeting God in the Word

Children's Message/Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson *Isaiah 12: 2-6* *Our Call to Sing for Joy Over Our Blessings*

Lay Leader

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.



L: This is the Word of the Lord.

P: Thanks be to God.**Special Music***The Advent Gift*

Choir

Second Lesson*Luke 1: 39-56**Mary Visits Elizabeth and Sings a Song of Praise*

Carol

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

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.' And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.



L: This is the Word of the Lord.

P: Thanks be to God.**Sermon***The Gift of Joy*

Responding to the Word

*Hymn

Love Has Come

#110, *Glory to God*

*1-Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See all heaven has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high*

*2-Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.*

*3-Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!*

*Affirmation of Faith

L: On clear winter nights, taut with cold and alive with the grandeur of God,

P: *We watch with the eyes of faith, for a star that will soon arise.*

L: Amid the wrappings and writings and seasonal songs,

P: *We prepare ourselves for the One who is God, thus revealing the Holy One to us.*

L: During the days ahead, as wonder-filled children of our Creator,

P: *We await the Christ Child's birth;*

A: *And with Advent hopes kindling our spirits, we come to praise and worship our God.*

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus: *I cast all my cares upon you. I lay all of my burdens down at your feet.
And anytime I don't know what to do, I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

God provided all that we need, and so we are called to return a portion of our blessings to God to be used in God's service. We so appreciate all that each of you shares for our church's ministry. May we all give sacrificially for God's glory.

Going Out to Serve

Closing Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

31

1-Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King.
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
 God and sinners reconciled!"
 Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
 Join the triumph of the skies;
 With the angelic host proclaim,
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

2-Christ, by highest heaven adored,
 Christ, the everlasting Lord!
 Late in time behold him come,
 Offspring of the virgin's womb.
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
 Hail the incarnate Deity,
 Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
 Jesus, our Emmanuel.
 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King!"



3-Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the sun of righteousness!
 Light and life to all he brings,
 Risen with healing in his wings.
 Mild he lays his glory by,
 Born that we no more may die,
 Born to raise us from the earth,
 Born to give us second birth.
 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

Blessing

L: Friends, as you leave this place and go out into the world where you will be surrounded with crowds and noise and cries to buy this or that,

P: We will remember WHO we are, WHOSE we are, and WHOSE DAY is coming soon.

L: And even when it seems as though you have no reason to be happy, be filled with JOY, for God loves you, and is with you wherever you go. May the blessings...

Response

*He Is Lord - He is Lord, he is Lord. He has risen from the dead, and he is Lord.
 Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.*