



**Fourth Sunday of Advent
and Christmas Eve
December 24, 2023
11:00 AM**

Cover art
by Peter Paul Rubens

It's Like This

It's like this. The sun itself
is constantly moving through space,
and yet it never leaves us.
Add this to the list of marvels –
like how a glass of water
was once in a cloud,
like how love can grow in us
despite sorrow, fear.
Given such gifts,
one must wonder how it is
our arms aren't constantly raised
in spontaneous praise for life.
I know and you know

why sometimes our hands stay down.
But now, standing still together,
even as we're spinning
and racing through space,
even if it's only a whisper,
when faced with the truth
that great forces hold
our lives in place,
it feels right to say
thank you, thank you,
eyes lifting, heart trembling,
the improbably earth
so solid beneath our feet.

~ Rosemary Wahtola Trommer

GATHERING

(Silence during the Prelude is requested in preparation for worship.)

PRELUDE “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland” BWV 599 J.S. Bach

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland Dietrich Buxtehude

Rejoice, Rejoice! Swedish folk tune and
15th c. French processional,
arr. Cathy Moglebust

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*As the light is brought into the Sanctuary,
and the candles on the Advent wreath are lighted,
the congregation is invited to sing the following:*

HYMN 90

WAIT FOR THE LORD

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

About the Prelude

The Prelude is a musical offering to help move the hearts and minds of the gathering community from the daily struggles of life to the worship of God.

“Advent” means coming or arrival. The season of Advent begins with an emphasis on final things (eschatology). We watch and pray with expectant hope for the establishment of God’s justice and the return of the Prince of Peace. As the weeks of Advent progress, the focus shifts to thanks and praise for the birth of the one who has already come - Jesus Christ our Savior.

The primary symbolism of the Advent candles has to do with light growing in darkness - leading up to the coming of Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us worship God!

(Those who are able may stand.)

Then Mary said: Here am I,
the servant of the Lord;
let it be me with according to your word.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

**Who are we, Lord God, that you should come to us?
Yet you have visited your people
and redeemed us in your Son.
As we prepare to celebrate his birth,
make our hearts leap for joy
at the sound of your word,
and move us by your Spirit
to bless your wonderful works.
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,
whose day draws near, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

*The Cross and Bible lead the procession,
symbolic of the centrality in worship of
Jesus Christ—the Living Word, and the Bible—the written Word.*

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN 347

PICARDY

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let us draw near to God with sincerity of heart
and full assurance of faith,
**our guilty hearts sprinkled clean,
our bodies washed with pure water.**

*Worship on the
Lord's Day*

Worship begins as the people gather - greeting one another, praying in silence, or offering music to the glory of God. The act of assembling in Jesus' name bears witness to the Church's identity and mission as Christ's body in the world.

About Hymn 347

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as this text from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody. TEXT: From the Liturgy of St. James, 4th cent.; trans. Gerard Moultrie, 1864; MUSIC: French melody; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Eternal God, our judge and redeemer,
we confess that we have tried to hide from you,
for we have done wrong.
We have lived for ourselves, and apart from you.
We have turned from our neighbors,
and refused to bear the burdens of others.
We have ignored the pain of the world,
and passed by the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed.
In your great mercy forgive our sins
and free us from selfishness,
that we may choose your will and
obey your commandments;
through Jesus Christ our Savior.

(Silent confession)

About the Kyrie

The Kyrie (Greek "kyrios" [Lord]) is a corporate musical prayer for grace.

Kyrie

James MacMillan

(Sung responsively by the choir and congregation)

Choir: Lord, have mer - cy. Congregation: Lord, have
mer - cy. Choir: Christ, have mer - cy. Congregation: Christ,
have mer - cy. Choir: Lord, have
mer - cy. Congregation and Choir: Lord, have mer - cy.

THE ADVENT OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Assurance of Pardon

A declaration of forgiveness proclaims the good news of God's mercy and offers the assurance of pardon in Jesus' name. The liturgist pours water into the font, which reminds us of the grace and cleansing of our Baptism, and the baptismal call to new life in Christ.

Believe the Good News:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

*The Peace

Since God in Christ has forgiven us,
let us also forgive one another.

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

*(Please exchange the peace with the words,
"The peace of Christ be with you.")*

**All praise to You, eternal Son,
Whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit, evermore.**

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Hear the Word of God! **Our ears are open.**

Titus 2:11-14

(New Testament, page 215 in your pew Bible)

Canticle

Song of Mary

Margaret Rizza

My Lord and Saviour is my song,
He fills my spirit with delight;
To raise me up his arm is strong,
The lowly precious in his sight.
Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

My name shall live from age to age
and ev'ry tongue his servant bless.
For mercy is their heritage,
whose hearts the Holy One confess.
Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

The proud beguiled by dreams of pow'r,
divided and degraded lie.
He casts them down from throne and tow'r,
and stoops to lift the humble high.
Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

He feeds the hungry at his board
and sends the rich unfilled away.
And, mindful of his promised word,
he answerd Israel's pray'rs today.
Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea Donimun.

With all the elders of our race
and those unborn who seek this birth,
I sing the glory of his race
and bring eternity to earth.
Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

*GOSPEL PROCESSION

(The congregation stands for the Gospel. The Gospel is read in the midst of the people, symbolic of the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. As the Bible is carried into the Nave, please turn in the direction of the reader, and join in singing:)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

*GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:1-20 *(New Testament, page 58 in your pew Bible)*

(Following the reading of the Gospel, the congregation will sing:)

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

SERMON

“Bethlehem Bound”

Guy D. Griffith

“...the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’” (Lk 2:15)

(A moment for meditation)

About Hymn 98

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. TEXT: Gracia Grindal, 1982, alt., MUSIC: Rusty Edwards, 1982.

*HYMN 98

To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary

ANNUNCIATION

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**Jesus, the long-expected Savior,
came into the world as a child,
descended from David,
conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of Mary, a virgin.**

He lived as a Jew among Jews.

**He announced to his people
the coming of God’s kingdom of justice
and peace on earth.**

**We affirm that Jesus was born of a woman
as is every child,
yet born of God’s power
as was no other child.**

**The coming of Jesus was itself
the coming of God's promised rule.
Through his birth, life, death and resurrection,
he brings about the relationship
between God and humanity
that God always intended.**

(From A Declaration of Faith)

THANKSGIVING AND SENDING

OFFERING

Anthem

Joy to the World

G.F. Handel, arr. John Rutter

(Congregation and Choir sing)

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and heav'n nature sing.

(Choir alone)

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

(Choir alone)

Nor more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground,
he comes to make his blessings flow,
far as the curse is found.

(Congregation and Choir sing)

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

To GIVE, please scan
the QR code below:

HYMN

MENDELSSOHN

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 God-head 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!"

HYMN

In the Bleak Midwinter

CRANHAM

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
 earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
 snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
 heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to
 reign:
 in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
 the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night

STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
 'round yon virgin mother and child!
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
 radiant beams from thy holy face,
 with the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

BENEDICTION**POSTLUDE** Vom Himmel hooch, da komm ich her

Johann Pachelbel

**(Those who are able may stand.)*

The *Postlude* is
 considered the final
 Alleluia of worship.

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 service this morning is
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OUR MISSION

*Ordinary people testifying to the extraordinary light
found in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”

(2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

TODAY@ WESTMINSTER

Worship Leaders

Preaching

Rev. Dr. Guy D. Griffith
*Associate Pastor for Adult Education and
Spiritual Nurture*

Liturgist

Rev. Dr. Donovan Drake
Pastor and Head of Staff

Advent Wreath Lighting

11:00 AM The Liles Family

Lay Liturgists

11:00 AM Ann Harris

Music

11:00 AM Tintinnabulation Handbell
Choir, Keith Cole, director
Westminster Choir

Dr. John Semingson
Director of Music Ministries

Dale Nickell
*Organist and Associate Director of
Music Ministries*

2024 Sanctuary and Parlor Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for the Chancel urns in the Sanctuary or the refectory table in the Parlor during 2024, please email **Terri Eckert** to select your Sunday at teckert@nashvillewpc.org.

*Please note that reservations for flowers
do not carry over from year-to-year.*

Arranged by members of Westminster's talented Flower Guild, this is a wonderful way to celebrate or honor your loved ones.

ADVENT SCHEDULE

December 24

Christmas Eve Services

2:00 PM – The Family Christmas Eve Service with Children's Choirs
Children are invited up to the Chancel to participate in the telling of the Christmas story.

We will be taking donations for Second Harvest Food Bank. Please bring canned goods or a monetary donation and place in the manger.

5:00 PM – Candlelight Service and Communion with the Westminster Choir & Instrumentalist, Sam Levine

8:00 PM – Candlelight Service and Communion with the Westminster Choir & Sam Levine

10:30 PM – Candlelight Service and Communion with the Laudate Youth Choir & Alumni
(9:15 PM rehearsal)

December 31

New Year's Eve Service

11:00 AM

Words and Carols

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence 347

Capo 3: (Bm)
Dm



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim, with

(G) (D) (Bm) (C)
B \flat F Dm E \flat



trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly
earth he stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man
on the way, as the Light of light de -
sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the

(G) (F#) (G) (D) (Em)
B \flat A B \flat F Gm



mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand
ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,
pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,

(Bm) (C) (G) (D)
Dm E \flat B \flat F



Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth,
he will give to all the faith - ful
that the powers of hell may van - ish
"Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

(B) (Em) (Bm) (A)
D Gm Dm C



our full hom - age to de - mand.
his own self for heaven - ly food.
as the shad - ows clear a - way.
al - le - lu - ia, Lord most high!"

(Bm) (Em) (F#m) (Bm)
Dm Gm Am Dm

98 To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary

Capo 3: (Em) (B7) (Em) (Am) (B) (Em)
 Gm D7 Gm Cm D Gm

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

(Em) (B7) (Em) (G) (D) (G)
 Gm D7 Gm B^b F B^b

"Fear not," the an - gel told her, "I come to bring good news;
 who e - ven now is with you. You are on earth most blest;
 What was the an - gel say - ing? It trou - bled her to hear,
 His name shall be called Je - sus, God's off - spring from on high.
 The an - gel an - swered quick - ly, "The power of the Most High
 "Be - hold, I am your hand - maid," she said un - to her God.

(Em) (Am) (B) (Em) (Am) (B) (Em)
 Gm Cm D Gm Cm D Gm

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