

Sunday, December 25, 2016

PRELUDE

"Now Sing We, Now Rejoice" - J.S. Bach

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the Choral Call, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,

"Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 97 and printed in our bulletins?"

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 97)

The Lord is King; let the earth rejoice;

The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.

Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice,

For you are the Lord, exalted far above all gods.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints & delivers them from the wicked.

Light has sprung up for the righteous,

And joyful gladness for those who are faithful.

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks to his holy Name.

Let us worship God beginning today with the lighting of the Christ Candle by the Murphy family...

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

VOICE 1: We have gathered to celebrate the birth of the one who is the light of the world. We light the Christ candle to remind us that the light of the world was born this day.

VOICE 2: Because Jesus took on our flesh, life itself is filled with new meaning and dignity. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory...full of grace and truth."

VOICE 3: Isaiah wrote: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shined. You, O Lord, have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He is to be called Emmanuel, for in him God is with us."

VOICE 4: Wiser men have said, "There are two ways of spreading light; to be a candle, or the mirror that reflects it." We light this candle to remind us that we are witnesses to the Light of the World, who came as a babe at Bethlehem and will come again in glory. May we be candles and mirrors of Christ's light to a dark and waiting world.

(Someone lights the center white candle and says...)

VOICE 5: Loving God, Emmanuel, we thank you for being with us; through the gift of your son, born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary. We are grateful that he came Son to walk with us and to lead us. Let his light shine within our hearts today even more brightly than it shines from the candles in this place. Grant that the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love of which we have heard and spoken of throughout Advent may be fully realized in us as we worship and serve you in His name, both now, in the new year to come, and forevermore. Amen.

The Murphys will return the microphone to the stand and will return to their seats.

The liturgist should step back to the microphone and introduce the hymn..

Would all of you who are able please stand and join in singing our opening hymn, "O Come, All Ye Faithful", #41 in our *Hymnals*.

The liturgist should step back from the lectern for the singing of the hymn.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

The Hymnal #41

After the hymn, the preacher will step into the pulpit and say...

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Coming into the glaring light of the Christ child's innocence cannot help but reveal our own sinfulness. But the gift that reveals sin is also the remedy for it. In penitence and faith, let us confess our transgressions in the light of God's love streaming from the manger as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of all worlds, we confess that we like to think our many blessings are the result of our own goodness. Because we choose to create our own reality in which you have no part, we do not sense your glory or sing your praise. By our words and deeds, we deny Jesus as our brother and King, and in so doing, reject Him as Savior as well. O God, we plead for forgiveness and ask that you would wipe the scales from our eyes so that we may see ourselves as we are, and know that it is by your own hand that we have been blessed beyond all deserving. Uphold us in your steadfast love so that we may glorify Christ forever. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

(Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.)

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Christ came, not to condemn the world, but to save it. His grace is greater than our sin and is freely given to all who seek it. Friends believe the Good News!

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

*GLORIA PATRI

The Hymnal #579

Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Peace, Christ brings to you; His peace He gives to you. He does not give to you as the world gives. So do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.

After a few moments, liturgist will step into the lectern and say...

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

We have each been blessed beyond our imagining and received grace upon grace. Let us give as we have been blessed, as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

The liturgist will sit down until the Doxology begins to play.

THE OFFERTORY

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

"From Heaven Above to Earth He Came" - J. Pachelbel

*DOXOLOGY (In Unison)

The Hymnal #592

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray... O God, you have given us the greatest gift, your Son. We respond to you by giving to you what is precious to us. Grant that we might learn to give even more freely, and open our hearts to put into practice what we have learned from Jesus. Take what we bring and follow it with your blessing, to the glory of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

"The Apostle's Creed"

Let us remain standing and reaffirm our Christian faith using the traditional words of the Apostles' Creed printed in our bulletins. Let us say what we believe...

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Invite the congregation to... "Be seated," and take a seat.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Pastoral Symphony" G.F. Handel

Dalene Baer, violinist

After the soloist finishes, the liturgist will return to the lectern & say...

Each Sunday of Advent we are using a short video produced by “The Skit Guys” to help introduce the morning message. This morning we will hear Wise Man’s account of Jesus’ birth.

AN ADVENT VIDEO

“The Wise Man”

After the video, the liturgist will return to the lectern & say....

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our Scripture lesson this morning is taken from the second chapter of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, from the fifth to the eleventh verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 1023 of your pew bible.

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

*The liturgist will invite the congregation to **“Be seated....”***

*He will then invite the congregation to prayer saying... **“Let us pray...”***

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER

Lord Jesus, more than 2000 years after your birth, the hopes and fears of all the years are still met in you. In you, our purest hopes are born anew as we wait upon you, the light and life of all people.

We pray Lord, that you would give substance to our dreams lest they grow cold in our poor hearts. And give us patience to wait for the time which shall surely come when the hopes and fears of all the years will be answered and our Lord in faith will be our Lord in fact.

If we must leave the quiet joy of this celebration and travel into a world of darkness and uncertainty where evil has its way, reassure us with your presence and go with us, always. As we follow our uncertain paths, give us faith to know that in our pain and suffering, in our doubts and questions, in our failures and defeats, even in the cold shadow of death, that you are no less there than in the bright joy that has come upon us this Christmas.

Prepare our hearts to be born anew, for the world is yours, and we are yours, and our hopes and dreams are yours; through Jesus Christ whose love is stronger than death, who goes with us on every journey we must make--whether in darkness or in the warm, pure light of your presence, and who taught us to pray saying...

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

THE SERMON

“Casting Call” by “The Skit Guys”

A Christmas Play

“Angel” - Olivia Smith

“George” - Todd Smith

“Tina” - Leighton Smith

“Joe” - David DeSeguirant

“Frances” - Lauren Murphy

“Connie” - Jessica Arnold

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

“Joy to the World”

The Hymnal #40

*THE BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;

Ox and ass before Him bow; and He is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis