

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

There is a book at the Sanctuary entry where prayer requests may be entered.

There is also a Square device at the Sanctuary entry if you would like to make your Offering Donation via credit card.

Spirit, Community, Action – Inside & “Out” Celebrating 43 Years of Being Out in Northern Virginia

Like Life, The Order of Worship is Subject to Change

Gathering Music

Jorge Martinez

Welcome & Announcements

Rev. Emma Chattin

Centering

At the sound of the singing bowl,
please take a few moments to prepare yourself for our worship together

Opening Song

MCC NoVA Choir

Illumination

Tee

Gathering Words

Genevieve Walker

One: We light the fourth candle of Advent today to remind us of joy,

Many: *An unspeakable joy that bubbles up within,*

One: Joy that rises up in warmth and illumination,

Many: *Joy that fills the air with music and song,*

One: Joy that cannot be contained, joy spilling out over fields and flocks,
joy singing to sheep and shepherds,

Many: *Joy singing to street cleaners, night shift nurses, and security guards,*

One: Joy that overcomes fear and anxiety,

Many: *Joy in the coming of Emmanuel, which means “God Is With Us”!*

One: Not just 2,000 years ago, but right here, right now, this day, this morning!

All: *Alleluia!*

Prayers of the Community

Dale Bradshaw

First Reading ~ Luke 2:8-15

Margot Sheiffley

There were shepherds in the area living in the fields keeping watch by turns over their flocks by night. And lo, an angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shown round about them, and they were very much afraid. The angel said to them, “Fear Not! For behold, I bring you good news, good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a savior. Let this be a sign unto you: you’ll find an infant wrapped in simple cloth, and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the Highest. And on earth, peace, good will toward all.” And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which God has made known to us.”

Second Reading ~ adapted from David Brooks in “My Decade Long Journey to Belief”

When faith finally tiptoed into my life it didn’t come through information or persuasion but, at least at first, through numinous experiences. These are the scattered moments of awe and wonder that wash over most of us unexpectedly from time to time. Looking back over the decades, I remember rare transcendent moments at the foot of a mountain in New England at dawn, in a Cathedral in France, looking at images of the distant universe, or of a baby in the womb. In those moments, you have a sense that you are in the presence of something overwhelming, mysterious. Time is suspended or at least blurs. One is enveloped by an enormous bliss; an unspeakable joy.

The art historian Kenneth Clark, who was not religious, had one of these experiences at an Italian church: “I can only say that for a few minutes my whole being was irradiated by a kind of heavenly joy, far more intense than anything I had known before.” Another person in William James book, “The Varieties of Religious Experience”, had a similar happening: “For the moment nothing but an ineffable joy and exultation remained. It is impossible fully to describe the experience. It was like the effect of some great orchestra when all the separate notes have melted into one swelling harmony that leaves the listener conscious of nothing, save that their soul is being wafted upward, almost bursting with its own emotion.”

Response Song Angels We Have Heard on High No. 125

Reflection When There Is No Room...
 What Do The Shepherds Say?
 JOY
 Rev. Emma Chattin

Community Dialogue

Offering Invitation Cornelius Butler
Offertory We Are An Offering MCC NoVA Choir
 by Dwight Liles

❧ Welcome To The Table! ❧

Rev. Emma Chattin

Invitation To The Table

Consecration & Words of Institution

Sharing The Open Meal of Christ

Time of Individual Prayer and Blessing

Community Blessing Rev. Emma Chattin

Closing Song Joy to the World No. 132

Benediction and Sending Forth Rev. Emma Chattin

Postlude

❧ Go in Peace ❧