FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Service
The Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE "Greensleeves" from *Four Carol Preludes* — Richard Purvis

WELCOME

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING — The Arrington/Green Family

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING RESPONSE — #9

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verse 3) — VENI EMMANUEL

3 O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN — #7

Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth — MIT FREUDEN ZART

1 Lord Christ, when first You came to earth,
Upon a cross they bound You,
And mocked Your saving kingship then
By thorn with which they crowned You;
And still our wrongs may weave You now
New thorns to pierce that steady brow,
And robe of sorrow round You.

2 O wondrous love, which found no room
In life, where sin denied You,
And, doomed to death, must bring to doom
The power which crucified You,
Till not a stone was left on stone,
And all a nation's pride, o'erthrown,
Went down to dust beside You.

*Please stand if you are able.

3 New advent of the love of Christ,
Shall we again refuse You,
Till in the night of hate and war
We perish as we lose You?
From old unfaith our souls release
To seek the kingdom of Your peace,
By which alone we choose You.

4 O wounded hands of Jesus, build
In us Your new creation;
Our pride is dust, our vaunt is stilled,
We wait Your revelation.
O Love that triumphs over loss,
We bring our hearts before Your cross;
Come, finish Your salvation.

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe. We turn into adults who obsess over what can be known, defined, explained. We praise those who have answers, and assume that wonder is an answerless game. Forgive us for closing that door to you. Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children. Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of thanks and praise.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

WE LISTEN

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE John 1:1-5 Kate Arrington

Leader: The word of the Lord;

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON The Rev. Ruth Santana-Grace

"Where Heaven Meets Earth"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

*SERMON HYMN #14

Savior of the Nations, Come NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND

1 Savior of the nations, come;
Virgin's Son, here make Your home.
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

2 From the Godhead forth You came,
And return unto the same,
Captive leading death and hell.
High the song of triumph swell!

3 You, the chosen Holy One,
Have ov'r sin the victory won.
Boundless shall Your kingdom be;
When shall we its glories see?

4 Brightly does Your manger shine,
Glorious is its light divine.
Let not sin o'ercloud this light;
Ever be our faith thus bright.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (the Apostles' Creed)

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 FOR OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory Pastorale — James Mansfield

*Doxology — #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow — 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.

*Prayer of Dedication

*SENDING HYMN — #11

O Lord, How Shall We Meet You? — VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

1 O Lord, how shall I meet You,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet You,
My Hope, my heart's Delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy,
A lamp within my breast,
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please You best.

2 Love caused Your incarnation,
Love brought You down to me;
Your thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling,
That led you to embrace
In love all loves excelling
Our lost and fallen race.

3 A glorious crown You give me,
A treasure safe on high,
That will not fail nor leave me
As earthly riches fly.
My heart shall bloom forever
For You with praises new,
And from Your Name shall never
Withhold the honor due.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Swiss Noel Claude D'Aquin