FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Service
The Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE Prelude on "Picardy" arr. Eric Rowley

WELCOME

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING Bob Hunsicker and Grandchildren

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING RESPONSE #9

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verse 2) VENI EMMANUEL

2 O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

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

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN #13

Prepare the Way BEREDEN VAG FOR HERRAN

1 Prepare the way O Zion
Your Christ is drawing near
Let every hill and valley
A level way appear
Greet One who comes in glory
Foretold in sacred story

Chorus:
O blest is Christ that came
In God's most holy name

*Please stand if you are able.

2 Christ brings God's rule O Zion
He comes from heaven above
His rule is peace and freedom
And justice truth and love
Lift high your praise resounding
For grace and joy abounding
(Chorus)

3 Fling wide your gates, O Zion
Your Savior's rule embrace
And tidings of salvation
Proclaim in every place
All lands will bow rejoicing
Their adoration voicing Chorus
(Chorus)

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of laughter, God of open doors and family reunions, we confess that we often doubt good news. We move through this world waiting for the other shoe to drop, waiting for life to fall apart, waiting for our humanity to get the best of us. Instead of leaning into joy, we lean into scarcity. We lean into fear. We lean into isolation. Forgive us for forgetting that joy is amplified when shared. Heal the wounds we have from past hurts, and teach us how to throw open our doors like Elizabeth. Show us how to find joy in connection that reflects your love for all of us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

WE LISTEN

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Luke 1:24-45 Bob Hunsicker
Leader: The word of the Lord;
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON The Rev. J.C. Austin

"Making Connections"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

*SERMON HYMN #5

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence PICARDY

1 Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

2 King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

3 Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of Light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

4 At His feet the six-winged seraph;
Cherubim, with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry,
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!

*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 Carol of the Field Mice David Davenport

Chancel Choir

Villagers all, this frosty tide,
Let your doors swing open wide,
Though wind may follow, and snow beside,
Yet draw us in by your fire to bide;
Joy shall be yours in the morning!

Here we stand in the cold and the sleet,
Blowing fingers and stamping feet,
Come from far away you to greet—
You by the fire and we in the street—
Bidding you joy in the morning!

For ere one half of the night was gone,
Sudden a star has led us on,
Raining bliss and benison—
Bliss to-morrow and more anon,
Joy for every morning!

Goodman Joseph toiled through the snow—
Saw the star o'er a stable low;
Mary she might not further go—
Welcome thatch, and litter below!
Joy was hers in the morning!

And then they heard the angels tell
'Who were the first to cry NOWELL?
Animals all, as it befell,
In the stable where they did dwell!
Joy shall be theirs in the morning!'

*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 #6

Jesus Comes with Clouds Descending HELMSLEY

1 Jesus comes with clouds descending;
See the Lamb for sinner slain!
Thousand, thousand saints attending
Join to sing the glad refrain:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ the Lord returns to reign!

2 Every eye shall then behold You
Robed in awesome majesty;
Those who jeered and mocked and sold You,
Pierced and nailed You to the tree,
Shamed and grieving, Shamed and grieving,
Shamed and grieving, Shall their true Messiah see.

3 Yes, Amen! Let all adore You
High on your eternal throne;
Crowns and empires fall before You,
Claim the kingdom for Your own:
Come, Lord Jesus, Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus, Everlasting Christ, come down!

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Veni Emmanuel arr. Rex Koury