

**Old North Church, United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation**

**THE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**December 20, 2020**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**10:00 a.m.**

We extend a warm welcome to all who have come to worship today. If you are unfamiliar with our traditions, the \* indicates that those who are able are encouraged to stand, **bold type** indicates unison participation.

**GATHERING**

PRELUDE *Bell Peal on "How Great Our Joy"* Linda Lamb  
Old North Church Bell Choir; Liz Smith, Director

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE The Schricker Family  
Kathy, Matthew and Sarah

HYMN *On This Day Earth Shall Ring* #S 23  
(ring bells on refrain)  
Holly Cameron, soprano; Maria vanKalken, organ Liz Smith, Betsey Halbert, bells

**CENTERING**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION Rev. Dr. Dennis B. Calhoun  
O Wondrous God,  
send your Messenger to us today with a word of grace  
if we are fearful, move us to Confidence.  
If we are weary, offer us Rest.  
If we are empty, fill us with Hope.  
We have been searching for you far away;  
Let us find you at home in our midst,  
Changing hearts and minds  
Urging us to join your work of Love.  
We pray in the name of the One who is coming,  
Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**LORD'S PRAYER (debts)**

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 and ever. Amen.

**SILENT PRAYER**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Do not be afraid, said Gabriel,  
surprising Mary  
and confronting her with the decision of her life.  
Do not be afraid, God is with you.

2020 has confronted many of us  
with life-changing circumstances and decisions.  
We know fear from the inside out.

In this moment, ponder that fear. Name it, if you can, at least to yourself.

*(silence is kept)*

Continue to ponder, and if you can,  
try to name where you may hear God calling:  
Do not be afraid.

*(silence is kept)*

### ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Our God, who has been with the people since the beginning,  
is with us now  
offering grace that is more than we can ask or imagine.  
God's love frees us from the past,  
and helps us move forward into a new future.  
Let us thank God-with-Us, Emmanuel, for faithful love.

### HYMN

*Angels We Have Heard on High*  
(ring bells on refrain)

#135

Holly Cameron, soprano; Stephanie Scarcella, mezzo-soprano; Maria vanKalken, organ  
Liz Smith, Betsey Halbert, bells

### LISTENING

### MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Christmas Pageant  
The Animal's Christmas Carol

Karen Kilty, Director  
of Children's Ministries  
Rev. Lindsay Popperson

### HYMN

*Jesus Our Brother*

#143

Youth Choir members, Ila Bumagin, Nina Johnson, Sydney McCoy,  
Lily Walsh and alum, Isabella Walsh  
Sarah Del Dotto, Director; Dara VanRemoortel, piano; Nina Johnson, violin

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

Read by Katharine Redmond

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here

am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

SERMON

“Changing Plans”

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

PASTORAL PRAYER

HYMN

*What Child Is This*

#153

(ring bells on refrain)

Stephanie Scarcella, mezzo-soprano; Maria vanKalken, organ

Liz Smith, Betsey Halbert, bells

### RESPONDING

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

*We Three Kings*

#162

(Verses 1 & 5 only, ring bells on refrain)

Liz Smith, Betsey Halbert, bells; Maria vanKalken, organ

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

### GOING FORTH

MUSICAL OFFERING

*I Heard the Bells On Christmas Day*

arranged by Randol Bass

original text by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1863)

Live recording from Festival Chorus concerts, 2019

BENEDICTION