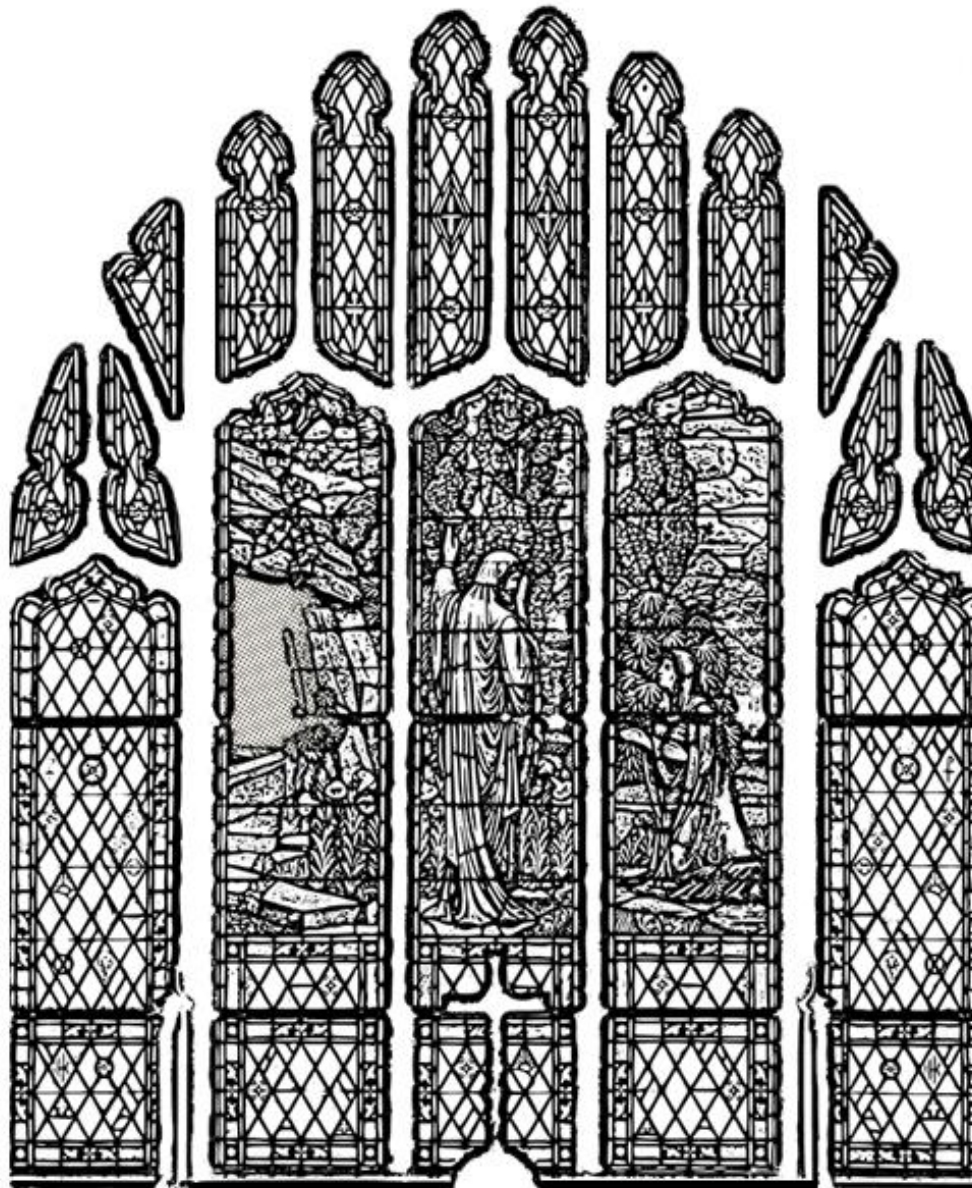


MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday, December 8, 2024, 8:30AM & 10:45AM

The Second Sunday of Advent

3319 WEST LIBERTY AVENUE ... PITTSBURGH, PA 15216 ... 412-531-7131

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, PASTOR ... tstrandburg@mlumc.org



Sunday, December 8, 2024 – The Second Sunday of Advent

God is with us, in every time and place. God speaks a word that is meant to help us, and God gathers us in congregations that should include all people. And most importantly, Jesus is our salvation, saving us from anything that can hurt or destroy us. These are truths we discover when we revive Isaiah, and they will never go extinct.

**Indicates an invitation to stand in spirit or posture, as able.*

The Prelude

Advent

Everett Titcomb (1884-1968)

As the prelude begins, all are humbly asked to conclude any conversation and make use of this moment of quietude to prepare your hearts and minds for the worship of Almighty God.

The Introit (10:45)

Prepare the Way, O Zion

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN,
trad. Swedish melody

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.

Refrain: O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

He 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.

*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.

All rise, in body or spirit, at the sound of the chimes.

***Opening Hymn**

"Wake, awake, for night is flying"

UMH 720

***The Greeting**

∇. The Lord be with you.

℞. **And also with you.**

***Call to Worship**

∇ Children of God, prepare the way! The Word of God is coming!

℞ **We come to listen and receive God's Word among us.**

- ✠ Children of God, the prophets call to us now and from generations past, urging us to prepare and refine our hearts for the coming of the Word of God. Are you listening?
- ✠ **We come to listen and prepare to receive God's Word among us.**
- ✠ Children of God, this is the mark of our preparation: that passion for God's Word would burn within us, cleansing us and renewing us to reflect God's love throughout the world.
- ✠ **May God ignite our passion for God's Word that has come among us as we listen, prepare, and receive all that God has for us today. Amen.**

***Opening Prayer**

Said by all, with one voice.

**Compassionate God,
greet us with your grace this day, for we need you.
We cannot save ourselves.
Though we may be frantic with activity, our efforts do not yield peace,
peace as you can give.
Today we would be quiet enough to hear your voice.
Today we would be still enough to feel your touch.
Help us to find that place where we can receive as well as give,
wait as well as act, and listen as well as speak.
Our whole world needs your peace.
Let us come before you and learn your ways,
laying down our weapons and feeding the hungry.
Come to us now, through Jesus the Christ.
Amen.**

***Silent Prayer**

***Response**

"Prepare the way of the Lord" (*sung several times*)

UMH 207

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Liturgy

First Reader: The prophet Malachi calls us to watch for the messenger God will send us, a messenger who burns with a passion for God's coming salvation:
"For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness." (*Mal. 3:2b-3*)

Congregation: In a world that strives to maintain the status quo, we choose to live with a passion for God's peace, to listen to those who call us to righteousness, and to submit ourselves to God's grace, that we might be refined and purified until we reflect God's love throughout the earth.

Reader Two: We light the candle of peace as a sign of our commitment to passionately pursue the work of making peace—in our hearts, in our families, in our communities, and throughout the earth, until the day that God's kingdom on earth is as it is in heaven.

As the first and second candles are lit, the people sing their response, inserted below.

"Christ, be our light"

Text & music by Bernadette Farrell

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your Church gath - ered to - day." The melody is simple and repetitive, with a final long note on "day" indicating a continuation.

A Message for Young Disciples (10:45 am)

As the young disciples gather at the front of the church, all sing:

**This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng.
Water, God's word, bread and cup, prayer and song: This is where children belong.**

The young disciples (3 yr. - 3rd grade) then depart the sanctuary for Kids Praise.

Teachers will lead them back to the sanctuary prior to the conclusion of the service.

The First Lesson

A Reading from the book of Malachi

MAL. 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you

delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like washers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Hymn**

"Lift up your heads"

UMH 213

***The Second Lesson**

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke

LK. 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'

Lector: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Said by all, with one voice.

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.**

Amen.

***The Affirmation of Faith**

UMH 882

All are invited to stand, in spirit or in posture, and to face the altar as the affirmation of faith is recited.

Pastor: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith let us now declare:

**All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

***The Sign of Peace**

☩. The peace of Christ be with you.

☩. **And also with you.**

*The people are now invited to share signs of peace with their fellow members of Christ's body.
Extended conversation would ideally and most appropriately be reserved until the end of the service.*

Announcements

At the Offertory

The Offertory Hymn (8:30 am) “Marching to Zion”

UMH 733

The Anthem (10:45 am)

Come, my way, my truth, my life

Homer Wickline,
Text: George Herbert

Come, my way, my truth, my life:

such a way as gives us breath; such a truth as ends all strife; such a life as killeth death.

Come, my light, my feast, my strength:

such a light as shows a feast; such a feast as mends in length; such a strength as makes his guest.

Come, my joy, my love, my heart:

such a joy as none can move; such a love as none can part; such a heart as joys in love.

***The Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

UMH 94

***The Sending Hymn**

"People, look east"

UMH 202

***The Dismissal**

∇. Let us bless the Lord.

℞. **Thanks be to God.**

***The Benediction & Recessional**

The people remain in place until the altar party has retired.

The Postlude

Leaders in Worship this Morning

SILAS WARD AND ASHER WARD, ACOLYTES

MATT BAKER, CROSS BEARER

BRENDAN & JESSICA DEMICH (8:30) AND

COURTNEY, DILLON, EMILY, & OLIVIA SCHMIDT (10:45), ADVENT WREATH LITURGISTS

LIZ DIPIETRO (8:30AM) AND LINDA MINNOTTE (10:45AM), LECTORS

THE CHOIR OF THE MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MR. BRENTON RAHMAN, CHORAL SCHOLAR

MS. TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, STAFF MEZZO-SOPRANO

MR. KIRBY DILWORTH, STAFF TENOR

MR. A. MITCHELL V. STECKER, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & LITURGY

THE REV'D THOMAS Q. STRANDBURG, SENIOR PASTOR

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sale Supporting Nyadire Connection following 10:45 worship (in the narthex)

The young people of the Sunday school program have been hard at work making crafts and treats for sale, with proceeds to benefit our mission partners in Nyadire, Zimbabwe. Their handiwork will be available for perusal and purchase in the narthex after the 10:45AM service; prices based upon a donate-as-you-feel-led model.

Terrific Tuesday/Super Martes – Dec. 10, 6:00PM

One session remains this month, with an Advent-focused study for adults on Magrey DeVega's The Christmas Letters, exploring the story of Christ's coming from the perspective of those who wrote about it first. Dinner served at 6:00, with programs for all ages starting at 6:40.

UWF Cookie Sale – Saturday, December 14, 9:00AM - Noon

Women's Bible Study – Tuesdays at 1:00 PM

The group is currently studying "Holy Disruption: Discovering Advent"; meetings take place by Zoom. Contact Kim Rhoton for more information: KRhoton@mlumc.org

Food Pantry Call for Volunteers

The group is looking for volunteers to help with shopping and bagging. For more information please contact Liz Dipietro.

Christmas Giving Tree partnered with Hello Neighbor

The church has partnered with Hello Neighbor to help with refugees and immigrants this Christmas. There is a Christmas Giving Tree located in the Narthex for you to take an ornament to donate a gift or give a monetary donation. For more information please contact Louanne Baily.

For further information about the above announcements, please refer to the weekly announcements email. To be added to the distribution list, or to submit an item for inclusion, please contact the church office.

The altar flowers this morning given by

Cyndy Smith Finniss

in loving memory of what would be the 82nd wedding anniversary of her parents,

Ginnie and Bill Smith, who were wed on December 18th,

and in celebration of the seventh wedding anniversary of her daughter,

Andrea Megan Finniss, to Jordan Wade Moran, wed at Mt. Lebanon UMC on December 16, 2017.

The flowers at the columbarium given by the

Kish & Gullborg families

in loving memory of

Grace Gullborg.

For information about furnishing altar flowers for future services, contact Lizzie Diller at 412-860-3614. The cost is \$45 per arrangement.