

Wesley United Methodist Church

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

December 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent/Advent Lessons and Carols

At Wesley we foster a sanctuary culture by creating a safe environment where all feel welcomed, loved, accepted, valued, and affirmed for who they are, through intentional practices such as empathy, compassion, generosity, hospitality, and inclusion.

Please let an usher know if you have questions, need assistance, or have a concern about health or safety.

Prelude

Ronna Davis, organ

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Rev Phillip Brooks and Lewis Redner

Echoing Bishop Peggy A. Johnson’s December Letter

TUNE: ST LOUIS

“Overture” from *Messiah*

G F Handel

Greeting & Announcement

*Advent Candle Lighting

Krysta Asante and Sandra Toffay

One: In days when God’s people longed for peace, Isaiah declared, “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins”.

One: We who gather today also seek comfort and peace, yet we are unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace, just peace.

Many: We wait as people who yearn for peace that bears the fruit of community, equity, and flourishing for all.

One: We light these candles as signs of God’s shocking hope and just peace. May they be beacons calling us to repent and to live the good news of Jesus Christ as we wait and watch and labor for the day when all people can gather together to worship and glorify God. Amen.

Light two candles of the Advent wreath.

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
 from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
 Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
 dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
 born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
 By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
 by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Common Prayer (*unison*)

O God, whose will is justice for the poor and peace for the afflicted, let your herald’s urgent voice pierce our hardened hearts and announce the dawn of your kingdom. Before the advent of the One who baptizes with the fire of the Holy Spirit, let our complacency give way to conversion, oppression to justice, and conflict to acceptance of one another in Christ. We ask this through the One whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Children’s Time

Rhianna Burke

First Lesson

Isaiah 40:1-8

Gary Robinson

Solo

Every Valley from *Messiah*

David Potts, tenor
G.F. Handel 1685-1759

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low;
 The crooked straight and the rough places plain.

Second Lesson

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Linda D’Acri

Hymn

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

UMH 203 (Stz 1-3)

Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son!
 Hail in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!
 He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free;
 to take away transgression, and rule in equity.

He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong;
 to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong;
 to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,
 whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;
 love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.
 Before him, on the mountains, shall peace, the herald, go,
 and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.

Third Lesson

Zechariah 9:9-10

Kevin Asante

Anthem

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Chancel Choir
Michael Larkin b. 1951

Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.
The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;
Go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory, the bridegroom is at hand.
Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

Fourth Lesson

Haggai 2:6 –9

Sandra Toffay

Hymn

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

UMH 213 (Stz 1-3)

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come, with us abide; our hearts to thee we open wide;
let us thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in us reveal.

The Offering

Offertory Music

Bronya Aba – Christmas Is Here

Ghanaian Choir
E. C. Bilson, Snr.

Christmas is here and we have made it through another year.
Our good Lord, we thank you. Help us through this new year.
Give us fruitful jobs. Christmas is here and we have made it through another year.
Our Savior, we thank you.

*Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*Prayer of Dedication

*Passing of Peace

“Shalom”

Mensah Essilfie

God’s peace be unto you,
We wish you Shalom!
The peace of God which transcends all
understanding be with you forevermore.

Fifth Lesson

Isaiah 35:1-6

Evans Quayson

Anthem

Amid the Cold of Winter

Chancel Choir
arr. Bret Rhoades cf. 20th C

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.
Snow had fallen, snow on snow.
In the bleak, mid-winter, long time ago.
Lo, how a rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as men of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.
What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yes, what can I give him?
I would give my heart.

Sixth Lesson

Luke 1:26 –35, 38

Krysta Asante

Anthem

Christmas Day

Ghanaian Choir
Ohene Adu-Nti

Long time ago in Bethlehem, the star was shining bright to announce the birth of the newborn King of Kings in a stable. He was born. There was glory all around as the angels sung their new song to the King.

It was joy, joy, joy on that day. The wonderful Counsellor, Prince of Peace was born on Christmas day.

Chorus:

Christmas day, Christmas day. O what joy it brought to the world. Christmas day, Christmas day, when the King of glory was born. It was joy, great joy, great joy on that day, the wonderful joy, wonderful joy on that day, wonderful Counsellor Prince of Peace was born. Jesus Christ was born on Christmas day. Kind of Kings, Prince of Peace was born.

While Shepherds watched their flocks by night, they were seated on the ground and the Angel of the Lord brought glory all around. He said peace be unto you! Good tidings of great joy. I bring to you and all mankind unto us the news of joy is clear, the wonderful Counsellor, Prince of Peace is here with us today.

*Seventh Lesson

Mark 1:1–8

Rev. Byungmoo Lee

*Hymn

Blessed Be the God of Israel

UMH 209

Blessed be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free,
who visits and redeems us, and grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.

Now from the house of David a child of grace is given;
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

On prisoners of darkness the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes,
to guide the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace;
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

*Benediction

Postlude

Combined Choirs

Tollite Hostias from *Christmas Oratorio*

Camille Saint-Saens 1835-1921

Tollite Hostias, et adorete, dominum in atrio sancto ejus.
Praise ye the Lord of hosts, sing his salvation, bless His name, show forth his praise in His holy house!

Laetentur coeli, et exultet terra, a facie Domini, quoniam venit. Alleluia.
Rejoice, ye heavn's, and be joyful on earth, rejoice in the face of the Lord, for He cometh,
Alleluia.

Alleluia! Rejoice, ye angels, rejoice all ye nations. Now in the face of the Lord, for He cometh,
Alleluia.

Worship Leaders: Kevin Asante, Krysta Asante, Rhianna Burke, Desmond Cheetham, David Dagle, Linda D'Acri, Ronna Davis, Chris Kerns, Byungmoo Lee, Debbie O'Driscoll, David Potts, Jennifer Quansah, Evans Quayson, Gary Robinson, Sandra Toffay, Chancel Choir, Ghanaian Choir, Worship Tech Team

Advent Candle Lighting – The United Methodist Church Discipleship Ministries, by Lisa Hancock.
Common Prayer - *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, 252.

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