



Lauren Wright Pittman, *Contours of Mary's Dream*, 2020.

Sunday December 18, 2022
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome to worship with the First Baptist Church of Christ.

Whatever road has brought you here and wherever you should go once we depart, know that you are welcome in this space fully and completely, and that the image of God we all bear together this hour is more complete because you are here as a part of it.

Things to Know

Masks are now optional on the church campus. We understand there are those within the congregation who will need or want to continue to wear masks, and we will continue to keep masks around the church for those who may want to use them.

Restrooms can be found through the double doors on the side near the elevator, one flight of stairs up or one flight down.

Participate in the service as much or as little as you like. Stand when others stand, or remain seated. Sing when others sing, or enjoy the way this old sanctuary fills with sound. Invitations to stand as you are able are marked with an asterisk (*). Invitations to respond in word or song are noted in bold.

For Those With Children

Thank you for bringing a child to worship! Take a deep breath and know they are welcome here. Parents with infants are more than welcome to remain in the sanctuary, or ushers can direct you down the back stairs to a comfortable room with sound from the sanctuary so all can still hear the service. A nursery is provided for children younger than 3. Preschoolers (age 3-Kindergarten) are invited to leave after “Let the Children Come” for our W.O.W. (Working on Worship) experience.

For Those with Special Needs

Thank you for joining us for worship! We love our historic buildings, but know they can be a challenge for those with mobility needs. Know that we are committed to doing all we can to make this space welcoming to everyone. Reserved seating for those in wheel chairs and those sitting with them is found near the elevator, and is marked with signs on the walls and on the back of the pews. Please don't hesitate to ask an usher for assistance. If you have special hearing needs, please ask one of the ushers to bring you a hearing assistance device from the sound booth in the back, or feel free to go back there and get one. An accessible restroom is located up one floor across from the office. If you, or someone with you, requires special assistance for any reason, please find a minister or an usher.

THE OFFERING OF PRAISE

The Sounding of the Hour

Anne Armstrong

Ford Myrick, acolyte

Call to Worship

“Prepare the Way of the Lord”

Jacques Berthier

(At the appointed time, the congregation will sing with the soloist)

**Prepare the way of the Lord,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
And all people will see the salvation of our God!**

The Prelude

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Anna Laura Page

Anne Armstrong, organ

The Litany

Joan and Kirby Godsey and family

God of love, in Christ you have given us a sign that you are with us.

O come, O come Emmanuel! Come to your world, which waits for you!

Like a mother loves her children, you loved us before we could love you.

O come, O come Emmanuel! Come to your world, which waits for you!

We light this candle of love against a world of indifference. Help us to be people of love, O God for whom we wait.

O come, O come Emmanuel! Come to your world, which waits for you!

Isaiah 7:10-16, Isaiah 49:15

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Joan and Kirby Godsey and family

The Congregational

O Come, All Ye Faithful
Response 103

ADESTE FIDELIS

(Refrain)

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

*The Hymn of Praise 84

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

The People Who in Darkness Walked

**The people who in darkness walked have seen a great light shining,
And those who in the shadows live have seen the new day's dawning:**

Refrain:

**For unto us a Child is born, to us a Son is given,
And on His shoulders He shall bring to earth the peace of heaven.**

**His name will be called Counselor, the everlasting Father,
The Mighty God, the Prince of Peace whose reign will be forever (Refrain)**

**This child will reign on David's throne and over David's kingdom
With justice and with righteousness, with God's eternal wisdom: (Refrain)**

*The Invocation

Scott Dickison

*The Gloria Patri 705

GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen, amen.**

The Welcome

Kelsey Stillwell

“Let the Children Come”

Rebecca Pursiful

Children in 3K-K are invited to W.O.W., a preschool worship experience! We will meet with the W.O.W. Shepherds at the end of “Let the Children Come.” Pick up your children there after worship. The W.O.W. leader this week is Rebecca Pursiful and the shepherds this week are Doug and Danielle Barnes.

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS

*The Hymn of Offertory 125

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

(Refrain)

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? (Refrain)**

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. (Refrain)**

**See Him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. (Refrain)**

*The Offertory Prayer

Laura Lease
Deacon of the Week

The Offertory

“Star Carol”
The Chancel Choir

John Rutter

Sing this night, for a boy is born in Bethlehem;
Christ our Lord in a lowly manger lies;
Bring your gifts, come and worship at his cradle,
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

See his star shining bright
In the sky this Christmas Night!

Follow me joyfully;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!
Angels bright, come from heaven's highest glory,
Bear the news with its message of good cheer:
“Sing, rejoice, for a King is come to save us,
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!”

Let us pay our homage at the manger,
Sing his praise on this joyful Christmas Night;
Christ is come, bringing promises of salvation;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary.

*The Offertory Response 131

In the Bleak Midwinter
(stanza 4)

CRANHAM

**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;
Yet what I can I give Him: give Him my heart.**

Christina Rossetti

THE OFFERING OF THE WORD

The First Lesson

Matthew 1:18-25

Eric O'Dell

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

For the Good News of God,

Thanks be to God.

The Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Scott Dickison

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, and the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen.

The Solo Anthem

"Sweet Little Jesus Boy"
Monica Stevens Kirby, alto

Robert MacGimsey

The Second Lesson

Luke 1:26-38

Scott Dickison

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.

For the Good News of God,

Thanks be to God.

The Sermon

"Courage and Love"

Scott Dickison

OFFERING OF COMMITMENT

*The Hymn of
Commitment 132

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

CAROL

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the heavenly angels sing.**

**All ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.**

**For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.**

*The Benediction

Scott Dickison

*The Congregational Response

"Alleluia"

traditional chant

Postlude

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"
Anne Armstrong, organ

arr. Gilbert Martin

Annunciation

By: Denise Levertov

We know the scene: the room, variously furnished, almost always a lectern, a book; always the tall lily.

Arrived on solemn grandeur of great wings,
the angelic ambassador, standing or hovering,
whom she acknowledges, a guest.
But we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions courage.

The engendering Spirit
did not enter her without consent.

God waited.

She was free
to accept or to refuse, choice
integral to humanness.

Aren't there annunciations
of one sort or another
in most lives?

Some unwillingly
undertake great destinies,
enact them in sullen pride,
uncomprehending.

More often
those moments

when roads of light and storm
open from darkness in a man or woman,
are turned away from
in dread, in a wave of weakness, in despair
and with relief.

Ordinary lives continue.

God does not smite them.
But the gates close, the pathway vanishes.

She had been a child who played, ate, slept
like any other child – but unlike others,
wept only for pity, laughed
in joy not triumph.

Compassion and intelligence
fused in her, indivisible.

Called to a destiny more momentous
than any in all of Time,
she did not quail,
only asked
a simple, 'How can this be?'
and gravely, courteously,
took to heart the angel's reply,
perceiving instantly
the astounding ministry she was offered:

to bear in her womb
Infinite weight and lightness; to carry
in hidden, finite inwardness,
nine months of Eternity; to contain
in slender vase of being,
the sum of power –
in narrow flesh,
the sum of light.

Then bring to birth,
push out into air, a Man-child
needing, like any other,
milk and love -

but who was God.

This was the moment no one speaks of,
when she could still refuse.

A breath unbreathed,

Spirit,

suspended,

waiting.

She did not cry, 'I cannot. I am not worthy,'
Nor, 'I have not the strength.'
She did not submit with gritted teeth,
raging, coerced.

Bravest of all humans,
consent illumined her.

The room filled with its light,
the lily glowed in it,
and the iridescent wings.

Consent,
courage unparalleled,
opened her utterly.



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Sunday, December 18

9:45 am Sunday school

11:00 am Worship

Monday, December 19

9:00 am Crisis Closet

9:00 am Circle of Hope Toy Shop

Wednesday, December 21

6:00 pm Service of the Longest Night

Saturday, December 24

5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25

11:00 am Worship

Deacon of the Week

December 15 Laura Lease

December 22 Eric Spears

Birthdays

The Record Speaks

Date: 11/30/22

Budget: \$601,815

Receipts:(Offering): \$590,000

Receipts (Endowment): \$59,180

Expenses: \$611,230

Missions: \$34,542

Year to Date: (\$20,700)

Condolences

We grieve with the family of **David McMahan** on his death on December 11.

Wednesday Night Supper

There will be no Wednesday night meal or activities on December 21, December 28 or January 4.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed on December 26 and 27 and January 2.

Holiday Sunday School Schedule

There will be no children's or youth Sunday school classes on December 25th or January 1st.

Service for the Longest Night

Wednesday, December 21, 6:00 pm

Join us for this contemplative, candlelit service in which we hold special space for the tenderness of the season.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Dec. 24, 5:00 pm

Join us on Christmas Eve for our traditional candlelight service. There will be no nursery, so all are invited to join us in the sanctuary.

Christmas Day Worship, Dec. 25, 11:00 am

We will gather for worship on Christmas Sunday at our usual time of 11:00am! There will be no Sunday school for youth and children. In addition, the congregation of Highland Hills Baptist Church will join us for worship on this special Sunday. Christmas PJs are welcomed and encouraged!

Book Club

January 22, 6:00 pm

116 Waterford Place

We will discuss *SAVING US: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* by Katharine Hayhoe. This is a multilayered look at science, faith, and human psychology, from an icon in her field. According to The New York Times -United Nations Champion of the Earth, climate scientist, and evangelical Christian Katharine Hayhoe changes the debate on how we can save our future in this nationally bestselling “optimistic view on why collective action is still possible - and how it can be realized”.

End of the Year Gifts

All end of the year gifts must be postmarked or received at the church by Saturday, December 31, in order to be counted toward this year. The church office will be closed on Dec. 26 and 27, and Jan 2. Otherwise, we will keep our normal office hours of 8:30 am-1:30pm, Monday to Thursday.

If you bring gifts after hours, you may deposit them in the mail slot on the double doors under the awning that lead into the fellowship hall on High Place, just to the left of the main entrance to the sanctuary.

If you give online, please note that gifts must be posted by Dec 31, which may be a few days after you press send—so don't delay!

Thank you for your generosity that has put us in a position to end the year on a high note!

Signs of the Season

The paraments on the pulpit and Communion table and the ministers' stoles are visual reminders of the current season of the church year. Advent is the beginning of the Christian year. The word "Advent" means "coming" or "arrival," and the season anticipates the birth of Jesus and the return of Christ in his Second Advent. Purple symbolizes penitence and fasting as well as royalty to welcome the Advent of Christ.



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