



Celebration of Worship on the Lord's Day

Advent III
December 17, 2017



Prelude

"Still, Still, Still"

arr. by Sandra Eithun

Westminster Peal

Gathering as the Children of God

Elder Daniel Schafer

Lighting of the Advent Candles

On this third Sunday of Advent, as we think about the coming of Jesus Christ, we light the candle of joy. When Christ comes into our lives, He brings the fullness of joy. He anoints our hearts with the oil of gladness. When Jesus was born, the angels said that His coming was good news of great joy for all people. Because Christ has come to us, we can live every day in the joy of the Lord. Praise to His name!

† Opening Hymn No. 8

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Prayer of Confession *(unison)*

Elder Schafer

God our Maker, we confess that we are not ready to meet you. You send your Spirit to release us, yet we remain captivated by sin. You stand among us in Christ Jesus, yet we claim we do not know you. Forgive us, God of grace. Make us holy; make us whole. Keep us safe and sound until the day of your coming; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Elder Schafer

Leader: Friends, believe the Good News.

People: *In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.*

The lighting of the Advent wreath is a relatively new practice in Christian worship. During Advent, children at the mission school Rauhes Haus, founded by Johann Hinrich Wichern in Hamburg, would ask daily if Christmas had arrived. In 1839, he built a large wooden ring (made out of an old cart-wheel) with 20 small red and 4 large white candles. A small candle was lit successively every weekday and Saturday during Advent. On Sundays, a large white candle was lit. The custom gained ground among Protestant churches in Germany and evolved into the smaller wreath with four or five candles known today.

† **Response** (refrain)

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

(hymn no. 23)

**Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**



Prayer for Illumination

Elizabeth Small

Scripture Lesson

Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 55:8-9

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Anthem/Special Music

"A Great and Mighty Wonder"

by M. Praetorius,
St. Germanus, J.M. Neale

*A great and mighty wonder, A full and holy cure!
The Virgin bears the Infant with virgin honor pure.
Repeat the hymn again! "To God on high be glory, And peace on earth to all!"
The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high!
And cherubim sign anthems to shepherds from the sky...
While thus they sing your monarch, those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice ye vales and mountains, ye oceans clap your hands...
Since all he comes to ransom, by all be he adored,
The Infant born in Bethl'em the Savior and the Lord...
And idol forms shall perish, and error and decay,
And Christ shall wield his scepter, our Lord and God for aye...*

Michael Praetorius was a German composer, musical theorist, and theologian who was born the youngest son of a Lutheran pastor in 1571. Praetorius' works demonstrate an inclination to reunify the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches through liturgy and song.

Sermon

The Christmas Play

Elizabeth Small

† **Affirmation of Faith**

The Apostle's 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.



† **Passing of the Peace**

Elizabeth Small

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Please exchange greetings of peace and welcome with your neighbor.

† Hymn No. 53

"What Child is This?"

Church Family Life

TJ Shirley

*Please take this time to pass the attendance notebooks located at the end of the pew row.
If you are a visitor, we invite you to visit our information center located in the Narthex.*

Prayers of the People

TJ Shirley



Moved by the Spirit

Christmas Joy Offering

Offering and Christmas Joy Offering

Offertory

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

Henry T. Smart,
arr. by Sandra Eithun

† **Response**

The Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.***

† **Prayer of Thanksgiving with The Lord's Prayer**

TJ Shirley

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.

† **Closing Hymn No. 37**

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

† **Benediction**

Elizabeth Small

† **Congregational Response (refrain)** *"Go, Tell it on the Mountain"* (hymn no. 29)

*Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!*

† **Postlude**

Guest Organist, Julie Bunn

The tune "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" has been found to have been in use since the thirteenth century. A Polish carol, it is possibly the first example of a mazurka, a Polish dance type popularized and mastered by Frederic Chopin.

† Those who are able, please stand

Wholehearted worship is our goal for everyone in the congregation. To make this possible for parents, we provide child care for young children from 8:45 am - 12:15 pm. We welcome children and encourage their participation in worship. The Nursery is located downstairs (Rm 120). Parents with children who may have difficulty sitting through the entire service may choose to sit in the balcony on the Mt. Vernon Hwy. side, allowing more freedom of movement. Adult supervision is required at all times.



MVPC Mission Statement

Blessed to Be a Blessing



We are a Presbyterian church filled with love and energy – an inclusive congregation committed to spiritual growth through *worship, study, fellowship, and service.*

- As **children of God**, we seek to *praise* God in worship and in all that we say and do
- As **disciples of Jesus Christ**, we *listen* to scripture, tradition, one another, and the world in order to understand God's will for us as individuals and as a community
- As **members of a family of faith**, we strive to *love* one another unconditionally, sharing our joys and standing beside one another in our struggles
- **Moved by the Spirit**, we *serve* our gracious God by taking that with which we have been blessed and turning it into blessings for others.



Giving to MVPC is easy online
<http://mvpchurch.org/index.php/donate/>

MVPC Staff

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