



December 31st, 2023

Gathering

During the Prelude we invite you to greet one another with love outside the Chapel, and allow those within to meditate, pray or just listen.

Prelude “Sheep that Safely Graze” J.S. Bach, arr. by Leonard Duck

Welcome

*Call to Worship

*congregation please stand in body or spirit

Leader: He was born in a stable.

People: But at his birth angels sang, plain folk worshiped, and kings paid homage.

Leader: He grew up in obscurity.

People: But when he declared himself, it was as if a new sun had risen.

Leader: He lived a life of love and died a death of shame.

People: But the life he lived was for our instruction; the death he died was for our redemption.

Leader: Death’s dark womb could not hold him.

People: On Easter day he was born anew.

Leader: Lord, be born anew this Christmas:

People: In me, in you, in us. Amen.

*Opening Hymn #132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Poem Selection from “A New Day’s Lyric”

by United States Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman

So let us not return to what was normal,
But reach toward what is next.

What was cursed, we will cure.

What was plagued, we will prove pure.

Where we tend to argue, we will try to agree,

Those fortunes we forswore, now the future we foresee,

Where we weren’t aware, we’re now awake;

Those moments we missed

Are now these moments we make,

The moments we meet,

And our hearts, once all together beaten,
Now all together beat.
Come, look up with kindness yet,
For even solace can be sourced from sorrow.
We remember, not just for the sake of yesterday,
But to take on tomorrow.

We heed this old spirit,
In a new day's lyric,
In our hearts, we hear it:
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne.
Be bold, sang Time this year,
Be bold, sang Time,
For when you honor yesterday,
Tomorrow ye will find.
Know what we've fought
Need not be forgot nor for none.
It defines us, binds us as one,
Come over, join this day just begun.
For wherever we come together,
We will forever overcome.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of wonder, you surround us with signs of your glory and surprise us with your presence. Yet we often miss the marvels you place before us. Focused on all that is wrong in our lives and our world, we become dull to the ways you make yourself known, and in our dullness, we fail to be witnesses to your good news of extravagant love and grace. Forgive us, and renew us, for the sake of Christ, we pray.

Time for Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: As the Lord has forgiven us, let us also forgive one another, that God's peace may reign in our hearts.

People: **People of God, let us rejoice, for in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

*Musical Response #113 “Angels We Have Heard On High” (*Refrain*)

Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons

*Passing of the Peace of Christ

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

The Word

Prayer for Illumination

Scriptures: Luke 2:22-40

Leader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church!

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon “A Word from the Wise”

*Hymn #141 “On This Day Earth Shall Ring”

Time for Response to Sermon

Joys and Concerns and Pastoral Prayer

Leader: Lord in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

Announcements

Sending

*Closing Hymn #113 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

*Benediction

Postlude “Good Christian Men, Rejoice” arr. by James Mansfield

Feel free to stand, chat and generally share in Fellowship as the Postlude sends us out into the world in Love.

We welcome all who worship with us this day. May you experience God’s presence and find inspiration for your journey of faith. This morning the leaders in worship are:

Rev. Michelle Fincher, Pastor; **Heidi Thomas**, Music Director;

Eileen Adair, Piano; **Diane Ritzdorf**, Liturgist; **Ryan Hodel**, Zoom Host

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