

Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church – December 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Join us on YouTube!

Opening Music “Canticle of the Turning” Glory to God #100

Greeting Mary Beth

Hymn “While We Are Waiting, Come” Glory to God, #92

Call to Worship and Lighting the Advent Candle [responsive]

Not in the mighty places of power,
but in little Bethlehem:

The Messiah is coming.

Not born in wealth and riches,
but to a woman who pondered:

The Messiah is coming.

Nothing will be impossible for God,
but when and where we least expect it,
look among the straw and the stars,

The Messiah is coming.

As we walk with God into this season of Advent, we walk toward God’s gift of love.

We light this fourth candle on the Advent wreath, hearing the promise of God’s love.

As the Psalmist says:

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let all creation sing for joy at the coming of the Lord.

Let all creation sing for joy at the coming of the Lord. (Psalm 80)

Let us prepare for the coming of the Light of the world.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;

righteousness and peace will kiss each other. (Psalm 85)

When the Lord restores our lives, we will be like those who dream;

those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy. (Psalm 126)

We will sing of God’s steadfast love forever;

we will proclaim the faithfulness of the Lord to all generations. (Psalm 89)

Opening Prayer

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession [together]

We forgot for a little while, O God.

We thought the celebration of Christmas meant

lights and trees, parties and presents, excess and extravaganzas.

And when those things were not possible for us this year, we were sad.

But then ... we heard the song of angels and we heard a baby cry.

We saw the glory of a heavenly chorus and we held God in our arms.

We heard the witness of shepherds and the ponderings of a mother's heart.

And we remembered the real story of Christmas.

Thank you for the surprising gift of your love.

[Silence for Personal Prayer]

Assurance of Pardon [*responsive*]

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Thanks be to God for forgiveness of sin. Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Music for Reflection

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Glory to God, #121

We Listen to God's Word

Children's Message

Carolyn Hayes

Scripture

Psalm 86: 8-13

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.

⁹ All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.

¹⁰ For you are great and do wondrous things;

you alone are God.
11 Teach me your way, O LORD,
that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.
13 For great is your steadfast love toward me;

Luke 2:15-20

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Leader: This is the Witness to God's Word. **People: Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Choosing Love

Rev. Mary Beth Lawrence

We Respond to God's Grace

Hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Glory to God #88

Invitation to Generosity Mary Austin to the end

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer [together]
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.

We Depart for Service

***Announcements**

Passing the Peace

Greeting: "The peace of Christ be with you."

Response: "And also with you."

***Commission & Benediction**

Closing Music "Joy to the World" Glory to God #134

Participating in the service:

Elder Lucy Nzelle and Oscar Ndivo-Mongo, Worship Leaders

Mrs. Carolyn Hayes, Director of Children and Young Families

Mr. Wade Meyers, Director of Music and Worship Arts

Rev. Mary Austin

Rev. Mary Beth Lawrence