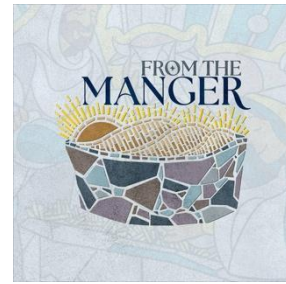


The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
December 22, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Advent



Preparation: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. - Isaiah 11:1-6

Gathering As a People of God

Invitation to Our Shared Ministry

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Prelude

Variations on *Nun Kom, der Heiden Heiland*
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Karen Keene

Lighting the Advent Candle of Love

Lizzie Conroy-Krutz & Mickey Martin

One: A long time ago, a baby was born in a town called "House of Bread." His name was Jesus. After his birth, Mary, his mother, was amazed at all that was being said about him and the community's outpouring of love. We have lit the candle of hope, the candle of peace, and the candle of joy. Today, we light the candle of love.

All: Love is the care and connection binding us together with each other and God.

One: As we light this candle, we are reminded that, from the manger, love is growing...growing to be God with us. His name is Jesus, Bread of Life.

Choral Introit

From the Manger
PCO Chancel Choir
Westin Sorrel, director

Amanda Meisenheimer
Arr. Andrea Hamilton

Mary's baby closely held, wrapped up in sweet expectancy.
Now the Messiah is unveiled, embodied for the world to see.
So all creation can be fed,
Love will be found in the breaking of bread.
From the manger love grows. He will be God with Us.
From the manger love grows. Bread of Life, Jesus

*** Call to Worship**

Evan Haskel

One: Come, let us sit at the feet, on the shoulders, and in the arms of the loving God who calls us her children.

All: We are God's chosen family, cousins in grace, united by an ancestry of miracles.

One: Come, let us sit around the table, telling stories of God's goodness—the stories of love that brought us together.

All: Let us nourish our friendships with encouragement and appreciation, leaving petty matters behind.

One: Come, let us sing the songs of our faith, a love song to God, for all the beauty that has accompanied our journeys.

All: We sing songs of praise in times of trial and triumph, for we know that in the singing, we are fortified with courage.

One: Come, let us worship the One who loved us from creation, from liberation, from exile, from the manger, from the mountaintop, from the cross, and from the empty tomb.

All: Let the love of God be the center of our worship today. Amen.

*** Hymn #102**

Savior of the Nations, Come, vs. 1-4

[Nun Kom, der Heiden Heiland]

Prayer of Confession

Claire Mayhew

One: Let us confess the ways in which we have not loved our neighbors.

All: Ever-loving and compassionate God, you have shown us how to love. Love requires us to care for others. We confess we have turned our eyes away from suffering. Love abounds in shared meals and conversation. We confess we have avoided interaction and common tables. Love reflects a rainbow of authentic expressions. We confess we have limited love to familiar boxes and boundaries. You have demonstrated your love through bountiful creation with enough resources for all to thrive. We confess we have chosen to hoard resources over sharing with those in need. From the manger, you have shown us love that visits the humble and powerless. We confess we have aimed our affections toward the popular and powerful. Teach us to love, that we might be true disciples of the one who showed us how to love. (silent confession) Amen.

Promise of the Gospel and Passing of the Peace

Claire Mayhew

One: Hear the good news: God's love is immense enough, infinite enough, to cover us when our love is not enough. When we confess our sins into the ocean of God's compassion, we are forgiven. Receive God's pardon and be at peace.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

One: We pass the peace of Christ because the love of God compels us to create peace among ourselves, our families, and in this world. When peace feels impossible, we dedicate ourselves to demonstrating peace from within. So, let us create peace here and now. May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you. Please greet your fellow worshipers in ways you feel comfortable.

* Act of Praise #583

Gloria, Gloria

Jacques Berthier

[*Gloria*]

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Offering

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Invitation

Offertory

Meditation on *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Sam Batt Owens

***Doxology #606**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Prayers of the People

Lucas Meland

One: Loving God

All: Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

in unison

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.

Prayer of Illumination

Hymn #88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, vs. 5*

sung

O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

The Christmas Story

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

Lizzie Conroy-Krutz, Connor and Evan Haskel, Theo and Isaac Krawczyk,
Claire Mayhew, Lucas Meland, Aria and Reiland Roelofs, Nina and Emma Roya, Isabella Salter

Special Music:

O, Little Town of Bethlehem

Lewis H Redner,

Lizzie Conroy-Krutz, violin

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams

Connor Haskel, cello

Nina Roya, cello

Scripture Lesson: Luke 2:1-7 Mary and Joseph Go to Bethlehem

Aria Roelofs

Hymn #114: *Away in a Manger, vs. 1-3*

Scripture Lesson: Luke 2:8-14 The Angels Appear to the Shepherds

Nina Roya

***Hymn #113:** *Angels We Have Heard on High*, vs. 1-3

Scripture Lesson: Luke 2:15-20 The Shepherds Visit Jesus

Theo Krawczyk

***Hymn #136:** *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, vs. 1-3

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 2:1 The Wise Ones Come from the East

Connor Haskel
Lizzie Conroy-Krutz

Special Music:

We Three Kings of Orient Are
Evan Haskel, viola
Emma Roya, viola
Claire Mayhew, French horn

John Henry Hopkins, Jr

Reflection: God's Greatest Gift to Us

Emma Roya

Prayer

Claire Mayhew

*** Affirmation of Faith: Love**

Evan Haskel

One: Let us affirm our commitment to and belief in the Christian discipline of love.

We believe love was born into this world as a tiny child, bringing freedom and salvation to all people.

All: We believe love embraces us in our joy and our sorrow, holding us closely and never letting go.

One: We believe love is expansive and inclusive, guiding us to see the humanity in each other.

All: We believe love empowers us to provide nourishment for the hungry and hospitality for the stranger.

One: We believe love calls us to act with compassion, even when it is difficult and costly.

All: We believe love inspires us to build a community where every person is valued, their dignity affirmed, and their worth celebrated.

One: We believe love challenges us to confront systems of injustice that cause hunger and inequality.

All: We believe love compels us to advocate for change, seeking justice and equity for all people.

One: We believe love teaches us that when we give of ourselves, we reflect the heart of God.

All: Let the people be loving, not just in words, but in actions that transform lives and systems.

One: Let the people be loving, creating a world where God's love is made visible in every act of kindness, justice, and advocacy.

**All: Let us love boldly, working together to ensure that all have what they need to thrive.
Amen.**

Sent Out As a People of God

*** Hymn #110**

Love Has Come, vs. 1-3
[Bring a Torch]

*** Benediction**

Lucas Meland

One: May Christ, the Bread of Life, whose mission was love and whose compassion knew no bounds, guide you on the journey. May the love of our Creator, who calls us to care for the hungry and oppressed, surround you. And may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to imagine a realm where all needs are met, strengthen you, now and always.

All: We Go in hope, peace, joy, and love to feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of Christ's coming.

Postlude

Fugue on *Noel Nouvelet*
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Richard Hudson

** Please rise in body or spirit*

Ushers: David & Kathi Cook, Ron & Barbara Dorr

This Morning's Fellowship Team: Thank you to the Parish Life Committee for supplying our snacks and to Edward Ennen for taking care of the coffee.

Education Hour: Extended time of fellowship and carol singing

Christmas Eve Service: December 24, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Scripture: Micah 5:2-5; Luke 2: 1-20

Christmas Day Dinner at the Church at 2:00 p.m.

Next Week: December 29, 2024 – We welcome Jonathan Townley to the pulpit. Please stay for an extended time of fellowship.

The art and the adapted liturgy for the Advent *From the Manger* series are from Illustrated Ministry. © 2024 Illustrated Ministry, LLC. illustratedministry.com

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Rebecca Mattern (she/her), Interim Director of Faith Formation
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, Organist
Westin Sorrel (he/him), Chancel Choir Director
Irene Shutt, Handbell Choir Director
Edward Ennen, Sexton
Anna Thiel, Office Manager
Gabrielle Shelton (she/her), Media Specialist