

DECEMBER 6, 2020
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE — *O Day of Peace*

JERUSALEM

*O day of peace that dimly shines through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,
guide us to justice, truth, and love, delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands, our hearts from envy find release,
till by God's grace our warring world shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.
Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the fierce devour the small;
as beasts and cattle calmly graze, a little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love, all creatures find their true accord;
the hope of peace shall be fulfilled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.*

LIGHTING of the ADVENT CANDLES

Triebl & Rosenbaum Family

*He came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.*

CALL to WORSHIP

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

One: We come to prepare the way;
All: The way for Christ—
One: The hope of Christ, the peace of Christ—
All: To enter our world, to enter our hearts.
One: We cry out together in the wilderness:
All: The kingdom of heaven has come near.
One: We come to be part of the light—
All: The light that shines in the darkness. Let us worship God together.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Molly Ramsey

Faithful God, we confess that we have not led lives of holiness. We suffer from impatience, apathy, and greed; we have not been at peace. We have failed to prepare your way and have busied ourselves to the point of anxiety, frustration, and anger; we have not been at peace. Forgive us, O God. Help us turn to you in love. Grant us assurance that the glory of your coming does not depend upon the righteousness of your followers. Forgive us, O Lord, and free us to try again.

(Time for silent prayer and confession.)

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

One: Beloved of God, by the mercy of Christ, your sins are forgiven. There is nothing in all the world that can separate you from God's love. Together let us proclaim this good news:
All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

RESPONSE to GOD'S GRACE — *Glory to the Father*

GLORIA PATRI

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE READING — 2 Peter 3:8-15a

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be dissolved.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

Pastor Rachel Rhodes

AFFIRMATION of FAITH — written by Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J.

It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss—

This is true: For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life;

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction—

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—

This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world—

This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers—

This is true: I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.

It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity, of peace are not meant for this earth and for this history—

This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ—the life of the world. Amen.

MUSICAL MEDITATION — *While We Are Waiting, Come*

WAITING

*While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.*

Refrain:

*Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting come.*

*With power and glory, come;
With power and glory, come.*

Refrain

*Come, Savior, quickly come;
Come, Savior, quickly come.*

Refrain

POSTLUDE — *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

*Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.*

*He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.*

*Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace,
And tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.*

QUESTIONS for REFLECTION at HOME

- In what part of your life are you crying out, "Let there be peace"?
- How might you open your heart more fully to the peace that Christ so desperately wants to offer you?

OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

Justin Hartz - Organist

Video Ministry Volunteers

Photos provided by: Damon Miller
Additional photos may be found on unsplash.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

****Please note all announcements for Sunday bulletins are due by noon the Tuesday before they are to be published. Please email announcements to Bulletin@MPCusa.net.***

ADULT EDUCATION CONTINUES!

Please join us every Sunday morning over zoom from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (notice the time change). Continuing through December 20, Ruth Workman is teaching a course on the kingdom of God as we wait and prepare for the coming Lord in the season of Advent. Please contact Pastor Alex at alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net if you are interested in joining, so he can add you to the email chain with the Zoom link for each session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT & NEW YEAR PLANS: BROWN BAG & BIBLE STUDY

Have you been considering joining Bible Study but haven't wanted to jump in midstream? Now is the perfect time to join us!

On December 9 and 16, we'll be journeying through Advent texts as we prepare for Christ's birth. Then starting on Wednesday, January 6, we'll be taking the plunge into 1 Kings together! We hope you'll consider joining us for this new adventure in the new year.

EVERYONE is welcome—this includes people who read the Bible and commentaries regularly, as well as people who don't even know what a commentary is—we are learning and growing together and we have a lot of fun doing it! We take a couple of weeks off during Christmas, but starting January 6, Bible Study will be back to meeting every Wednesday from Noon-1:00 p.m. over Zoom. Make this part of your New Year's resolution and carve out a part of your week to study God's word among friends. Following our Bible Study, folks are also welcome to stay for our weekly prayer meeting that meets for about 15-20 minutes on Zoom.

If you would like to attend Brown Bag & Bible Study (or are at least interested enough to check it out for a couple of weeks), please contact Pastor Rachel at rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net. We'd love to have you!

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE FROM MPC CLOTHING CENTER!

MPC Clothing Center is up and running. We have an abundance of Christmas items to help make your holiday brighter. So please come and see the hard-working girls at MPC's Clothing Center on any Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. till December 17.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT MPC

We hope that you will join us for this sacred, holy night of worship, in whatever way you are able, as we are planning to offer the following three options for Christmas Eve Worship:

“Christmas Eve On-Demand” — A Christmas Eve service of worship pre-recorded from our beautiful sanctuary. This service will be available online, on our website, starting the morning of December 24. You may view it at any time on Christmas Eve or in the days following. This service will be the closest thing we have to a “Traditional” Christmas Eve service this year. It will include traditional Scripture readings, Christmas Eve hymns, and anthems offered by both our Bell Choir and Chancel Choir. Our sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas Eve and our organ will be played magnificently for the glory of God. We hope you will set aside some time to worship God alongside us in this way. If you are unable to access the internet and would like a DVD copy of the service, please be in touch with the Church Office by December 10 so we can provide one for you.

“Christmas Eve Around the Crèche” at 4:00 p.m. — For those who don't know, the “Crèche” is the Nativity scene that is placed outside each year off the church parking lot. During this 20-30 minute service of worship on Christmas Eve, we will gather outside, masked, and socially distant around the crèche. We will sing hymns, hear the story of Christmas in scripture, and share the light of Christ with one another. Families with young children are encouraged to attend, as we will ensure a safe and family friendly service. Attendees will be asked to bring their own candle. As you might imagine, this service is weather dependent and also depends upon our ability to still gather in large groups at that time. We are hopeful, but we will keep you informed.

“Silent Night, Holy Night: Christmas Eve Over Zoom” at 7:00 p.m. — This service of worship will take place over Zoom, similar to our Maundy Thursday service or our weekly Virtual Fellowship. This will be an opportunity to gather together even though we are apart, and celebrate the sacred gift of this night. We will sing hymns (led by individual families—everyone else on mute!), hear the story of Christmas in scripture, and share the light of Christ. Everyone will be asked to bring their own candle or Advent wreath as we celebrate a light that the darkness can never overcome. Families with young children are encouraged to attend. A portion of the service will be geared specifically toward children.

Boy Scout Troop 3's Annual Christmas Tree Sale Fundraiser

Fresh Cut Trees, Wreaths, Grave Blankets, & Pine Roping

6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Weeknights ~ 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Saturdays ~ 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sundays

Help support Troop 3 Scouts achieving goals for themselves and their community.

