

First United Church, Mount Pearl Pastoral Charge
Sunday, December 22nd, 2024

Praise Medley: Do You Hear What I Hear, Sing We the Song of Emmanuel

Greeting and Announcements

Introit: A Candle Is Burning **VU 6 vs 4**

Call to Worship:

(loud) LISTEN!

(loud) **LISTEN!**

(whisper) Listen!

(whisper) **Listen!** (Silent pause)

God comes to us in the voice of others.

God speaks in the ordinary and in the mundane:

In an insignificant town, in minor acts and in words of love, in silly spontaneous songs, in a chat between kin.

God, open our ears and spirits to each other, where we can listen and hear your voice.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

READERS: (Brenda, Stephanie and Brandon Corcoran, Judy Beazley)

What do you do when an angel interrupts your day?

You stop.

What do you do when an angel speaks?

You listen.

An angel interrupted Joseph's dream.

He stopped. He listened.

The angel had a message for Joseph, who was engaged to the pregnant Mary: "The baby is God's Son."

But Joseph said, "I can't handle such a challenge."

The angel said, "Have courage. God will be with you."

Remembering Zechariah and Elizabeth, we light this candle of Possibility.

ALL: In the circle of God's light, all things are possible.

(Light one blue candle)

READERS:

Remembering Mary, we light this candle of Risk.

ALL: In the circle of God's light, we dare to risk.

(Light a second blue candle)

READERS:

Remembering the shepherds, we light this candle of Joy.

ALL: In the circle of God's light, we live with joy.

(Light a pink candle)

READERS:

Remembering Joseph, we light this candle of Courage.

ALL: In the circle of God's light, we live with courage.

(Light a third blue candle)

SUNG RESPONSE: Angel, from the realms of glory,

(unison)

Speak to Joseph in his dreams.

You who sang creation's story,

now proclaim Messiah's birth:

come and worship, come and worship,

worship in this Advent time.

Prayer of Approach: *(unison)*

Holy God, now in the silence, whisper of joy which comes into every life. Now in the comfort of carols, sing of hope which takes away the despair which envelops us. Now in familiar words heard anew, speak to us of grace which is born into barren lives, of peace which is birthed in war's shadowed fears.

Now leaning next to those who have always been a part of us, and those from whom we have been apart, remind us of your heart which always accepts us, always welcomes us. Now in the love which is ours forever, draw us closer to your heart, so we can be surprised by wonder, swaddled in serenity, embraced by tenderness. Now touch us once again with the fulfillment of Christmas. Amen.

Hymn: Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus **VU 2**

A Time for All Ages

Prayer of Confession: (unison)

We admit, God of Advent, that it is easier to trust a politician's glib words than yours which were spoken so long ago. We know how afraid we are of tomorrow, because of what we do today, ignoring what you brought about so long ago. We, who have been given so much from your heart, find it hard to share a smidgen from our abundance.

Forgive us, God our hope, and have mercy on us. Lift us to our feet; draw us close into your loving embrace; drench us the buckets of grace drawn from the deep wells of life, so we will have the courage to declare you as our God, as we follow Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with the Holy Spirit. (Silent reflection)

Assurance of Pardon:

As plain as the heart in our chests, the good news is this: God is our hope. God is our life. God is our future.

We sing aloud, our voices at full throttle. We are forgiven, we are saved! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn: When A Child Is Born

Offertory Hymn: Spirit, Open My Heart

Offertory Prayer: (unison)

In these moments, God who comes, remind us of those who are yearning to be lifted to their feet, those who hunger for hope, those who look for peace. May our gifts be used to serve them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Gospel Lesson: John 1:1-5,9-14

Ministry of Music: *'Christmas Cantata'*

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Hark! the Herald Angels Sing **VU 48**

Commission and Benediction