



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We sing stories
of hope*



"Prophecy" by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

4th Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023

HOW DOES A WEARY WORLD REJOICE?

The Sound of Hope

*We've been singing a sad song
for quite some time,
the melody syncing with our heartbeats,
the lyrics stamped to the front of our minds.
You say, sad songs are honest.
It's hard to disagree,
for sad songs tap us on the shoulder.
Sad songs remind us
of the 100 different corners
heartbreak could be behind.*

*But I don't have it in me
to sing a sad song forever.*

*So despite the news,
despite the aches in my body,
despite the phone call last night
that says she's waiting for the test results,
despite yesterday's shooting,
despite the unknown and unchanged,
I am going to sing a song of hope.*

*Like a canary in a snowstorm,
I don't need another song of what is;
I need a song of what could be.
So sing with me.*

*Our voices may get drowned out by the wind,
but surely someone will ask:
Was that a flash of yellow in the snow?
Was that the sound of hope?*

Prayer by Rev. Sarah Speed/ A Sanctified Art LLC/Sanctifiedarts.org

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Prelude on Veni Emmanuel

Edward Bairstow

*CALL TO WORSHIP

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

*CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

How does a weary world practice love?

By sending cards, and picking up the phone.

By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others.

By learning people's stories and finding common ground.

By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.

There are a million ways to practice love.

So today we light the candle of love as a
reminder and a charge.

**With God's help, may we bring love into
a weary world. Amen.**

*SONG OF PRAISE

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Hymnal, No. 133

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

Vince Leseney

Holy God,

More days than not, hope feels like the rain.

We try to hold onto it with cupped hands,

but eventually, it slips right on through.

Forgive us for holding hope so loosely.

Forgive us for allowing the realities of today to define tomorrow.

We know that this world needs people of hope, so today we pray:

turn us into those people.

Teach us how to sing Mary's song of hope for the world.

With open hearts we pray, amen.

(Time of silent reflection)

I am God's beloved.

I am God's beloved.

I am forgiven.

I am forgiven.

I am blessed and sent to serve.

I am blessed and sent to serve.

*THE PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

*SONG OF RESPONSE

Gloria (refrain only)

Hymnal, No. 113

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Charlotte Lovett

SCRIPTURE READING

Page No. 832

Luke 1:46-55

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Light of Love

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:67-80

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Page No. 832

MESSAGE

We Sing Stories of Hope

Tracy L. Evans

*SONG OF FAITH

Lullaby of Praise

Bulletin p. 7

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM OF ELIZA LOU FARRIS

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: Apostles' Creed

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE BAPTISM

PRAYER AND WELCOME

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, p. 35

*Please pray the Lord's Prayer
in the language and wording most familiar to you.*

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY Creator of the Stars of Night (Verse 4) Hymnal, No. 84
To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*SENDING SONG O Little Town of Bethlehem Hymnal, No. 121

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

*Please rise in body or spirit.

A Statement of Faith for this Fourth Sunday of Advent

We believe
that hope can change the world.
We believe
that God uses ordinary people,
like an unwed teenage mother,
for extraordinary good.

And we believe
that each of these ordinary people
can make a difference.

We know that grief, fear, and suffering abound.
We know that suffering quells joy and makes it harder to hope.
But we choose hope anyway.
In the face of hardship,
we hope together.
We hope with God.
We hope for a better world.
This is our song.
We believe; help our unbelief.
In Christ's name we pray, amen.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. You may also indicate interest in membership by checking the appropriate column in the ritual of friendship booklet. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for December 24: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38.

The Food & Shelter items of the month for December **canned soup and crackers. Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.**

Hearing-assistance devices and **large print hymnals** are available from the head usher.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

133

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O come
 2 True God from true God, Light from light e - ter - nal, born
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels; sing in ex - ul - ta - tion; sing,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing; Je -

ye; O come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come, and be - hold him,
 of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes; ver - y God, be -
 all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to God, all
 sus, to thee be all glo - ry given; Word of the Fa - ther,

Refrain

born the King of an - gels!
 got - ten, not cre - at - ed!
 glo - ry in the high - est! O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let
 now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

Lullaby of Praise

WARUM SOLLT ICH ("All My Heart This Night Rejoices")

Text: Anna Strickland (2023)

Music: Johann G. Ebeling (1666)

Praise to God, for God is wor - thy
Praise, my soul, for God is ho - ly
Praise to God who shows us fa - vor

Seers of old have fore - told Cov - e - nants of
O - ver - throws lof - ty thrones Lift - ing up the
Brings us hope, lifts the low Sends to us a

mer - cy God's great love for us is ach - ing
low - ly God's great jus - tice roles re - ver - sing
sav - ior God's great mer - cy here re - deem - ing

Guide our feet in - to peace As the dawn is
Hun - gry fed more than bread Rich and haugh - ty
Set - ting free 'til we see earth and heav - en

break - ing
serv - ing
meet - ing

121 O Little Town of Bethlehem



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
 cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;



the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to - God the king, and peace to all on earth.
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

