

WORDS

FOR THE BEGINNING

— HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK —



Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

4th Sunday in Advent

December 22, 2024

WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING

Despite It All
What's to love?
she asked.
I understood the question.

I've seen the riot gear,

the tear gas,
the names of children
wiped from this
war-stained world.
I've seen the spray paint Swastikas
and the Proud Boys with their flags.
I've heard grandmothers at church
pray in urgent, desperate whispers.
And I've watched young mothers cry,
because teachers carry guns.
I've felt the tremor of an earthquake.
I've felt the heat of climate change.
I've seen the temple curtain tear in two.

But despite it all,
the bell that wouldn't stop tolling,
the words that won't stop clanging through my heart,
are, so much.

There is so much left to love.

So much left to hope for.
*Poem by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art
LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

PRELUDE

Prelude on Veni Emmanuel

Edward Bairstow

BRINGING THE LIGHT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Vince Leseney

In this weary world,

we sing of joy.

In this fragile world,

we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world,

we look for God.

In this tender world,

we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith.

So in this time of worship,

may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.

With hope in our hearts, amen!

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*SONG OF PRAISE

Love Has Come

Hymnal, No. 110

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

Gracious God,

You paint pictures of what could be,

but we declare those visions impossible.

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,

but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.

You dream of a more just day,

but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.
**Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
and to not be afraid of either.**
With gratitude we pray, amen.
(Time of silent reflection)

Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.

*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 Angels We Have Heard on High (Refrain) Hymnal, No. 113
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

MISSION MATTERS

Charlotte Lovett

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Joan Cole

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25

Page No. 783

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Peace, Peace

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:46-55

Page No. 832

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

Hope Is Worth the Risk

Tracy L. Evans

*SONG OF FAITH

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Hymnal No. 121

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,
a God who fills our nights with stars,
who follows winter with spring,
who dwells with and among us.**

**We believe that this God has dreams for creation,
dreams of justice like a mighty stream
and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.**

Therefore, we push cynicism aside.

**We risk vulnerability.
We hold onto hope,
and we declare:
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”**

SHARING OF 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

*DOXOLOGY

Creator of the Stars of Night, (verse 4)
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. Amen.

Hymnal, No. 84

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG

Hope is Worth The Risk

Bulletin p. 7

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

Sortie: Venez, divin Messie

César Franck

*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for December 29: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52.

The Food & Shelter items of the month for December are 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.

Love Has Come

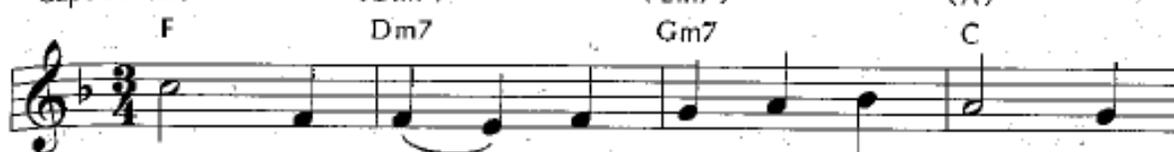
110

Capo 3: (D)

(Bm7)

(Em7)

(A)



1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D)

(Bm7)

(Em)

(A7)

(D)



Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all
 Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the
 Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A)

(D)

(Bm)

(D)

(A)

(G)

(D)



heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of
 glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her
 Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7)

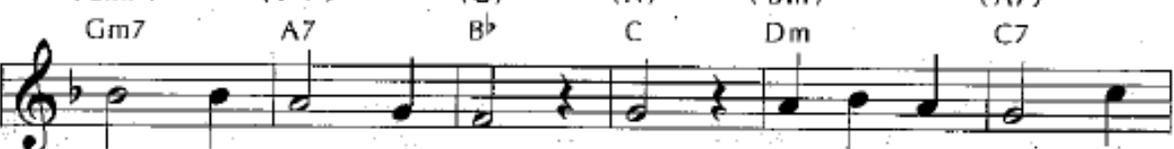
(F#7)

(G)

(A)

(Bm)

(A7)



joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a
 heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she
 hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D)

(A)

(G)

(A)

(D)

(A)

(A7)

(Dsus)

(D)



Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.
 Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

121 O Little Town of Bethlehem



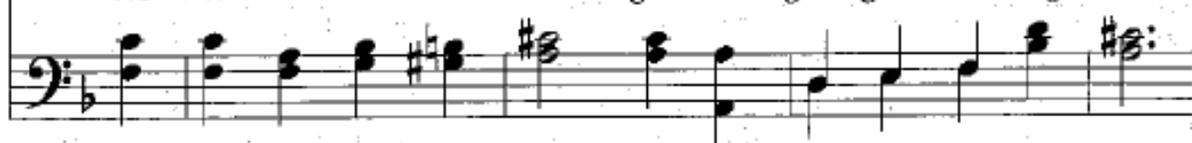
1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



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 - ell!



Hope Is Worth the Risk

NOËL NOUVELET 11.10.11.10

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Traditional French melody



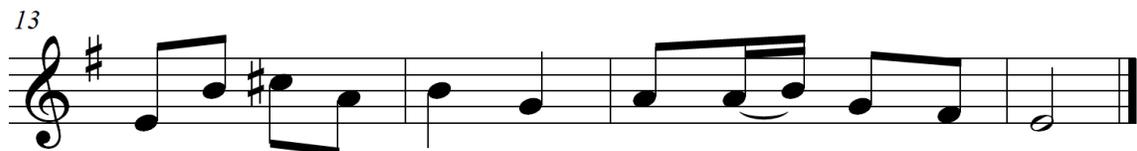
Col - lege stu - dents ga - ther pro - tes - ting for peace
Young girls in I - ran to pro - test the re - gime
In Tai - wan the dream - ers flood the streets with blooms
Li - ber - i - an wom - en scarred by ci - vil war
Eth - nic mu - sic rings out from the Bal - tic Sea
Age to age and coast to coast peo - ple have stood



Stand - ing firm in spite of vio - lence from po - lice
Take off their hi - jabs to let their hair be seen
Sun - flow - ers and li - lies li - ber - ty's per - fume
Keep the peace talks go - ing by bar - ring the doors
As the peo - ple sing their right to li - ber - ty
Risk - ing some - thing big in hope of some - thing good



Em - pires will fight with force or pol - i - tics



Still the Spi - rit whis - pers, "Hope is worth the risk"