



THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

for December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we welcome guest artist Robert Humphreville, who, at the organ, is sharing in this morning's worship with Kathy and Ji Hye. Rob is a long-time friend of Maple Street Church. He is a gifted church organist, known for his expressive hymn-playing and improvisation, and a talented pianist, known particularly for his live piano accompaniment for silent movies in and around Boston, including here at Maple Street Church.

“Raise your voice... do not be afraid.” — The Messenger

ADVENT 4

“I Believe in the Sun: Daring Right Relationship”

Prelude

Good Christian Men, Rejoice and Joy to the World

Members of the Handbell Choir: Priscilla Curda, Isabel Donahoe,
Deb Sauer, Jeff Sauer, Matthew Shannon
Ji Hye Jung, director

Welcome

Rev. Douglas Vooyo

Crossing the Threshold

In both the Gospel of Matthew and Isaiah, a messenger appears as a sign from God, heralding a new era. In each passage, the words “do not be afraid” appear...offering a clue that the messenger-whether prophet or angel-was referencing something that induced fear in the recipient. A new way of being together, or relating and loving, takes courage-eschewing the present order of things so that a new and better day can be born.

*I believe in the light, I believe in the light
That has come, that has come and is coming
We see the star rising
We hear the glad tidings
We Know we are not alone*

Opening Prayer

Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of daring love. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle - even when we cannot see a better day when we will act like the human family we are, ignite the flame of love within us,

People: that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.

Pastor: Help us face this fear of difference and dare to see what love can do. Amen.

You are invited to light your Advent Candle of Love at this time.

Hymn

When God Is A Child words by Brian Wren; music by Joan C. Fogg

Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on still the morning is bright. CHORUS

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth. CHORUS

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Savior is born. CHORUS

Love is a flame that burns in our heart, Jesus has come and will never depart.

CHORUS: When God is a child
there's joy in our song. The last shall be first
and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

Children's Time to Shine

This Little Light of Mine

Isaiah Reading— Isaiah Reading 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,

who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’

⁸ Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;

for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.

⁹ Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰ The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see

Special Music

Ding Dong Merrily! He Is Born!

Traditional carols, arr. Anna Laura Page

Kathy Gross, flute

Ji Hye Jung, piano

Gospel Reading—Matthew 1:18-23

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

Hymn

Long Ago, Prophets Knew

PERSONENT HODIE, words by Fred Pratt Green

Long ago, prophets knew Christ would come, born a Jew,
Come to make all things new; bear his people's burden,
Freely love and pardon.

Refrain: Ring bells, ring, ring, ring!

Sing choirs, sing, sing, sing!

When he comes, when he comes,

Who will make him welcome?

God in time, God in man, this is God's timeless plan;
He will come, as a man, born himself of woman,
God divinely human. **Refrain**

Mary hail! Though afraid, she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid: till the time expected,
Nurtured and protected. **Refrain**

Journey ends! Where afar Bethlehem shines like a star,
Stable door stands ajar. Unborn Son of Mary,
Savior, do not tarry! **Refrain**

Gospel Reading—Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Hymn

Away in a Manger Tune by W.J. Kirkpatrick, words anonymous

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

Gospel Reading—Luke 2:8-15

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. ⁹The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. ¹¹Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, ¹⁴"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." ¹⁵When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us."

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard On High Traditional French Carol: Tune: GLORIA

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain: Glo - - - - - ri - a in excelsis Deo,
Glo - - - - - ri - a in excelsis De - o.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song? **Refrain**

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. **Refrain**

We Respond –Litany of Belief

In times when humanity disappoints,
perhaps when even our own thoughts and behaviors disappoint,
it is an important act to call out, name and claim, the consequences of our wrongs. And in times of
distress, it is a prophetic act to call out,
name and claim, our belief in peace for the world.

Hear these statements of belief from siblings in faith:

Voice 1: I believe we have been taught to fear one another AND

Voice 2: I believe that we are capable of learning to love.

Voice 1: I believe that our society is built on a foundation of oppression of some over others AND

Voice 2: I believe we can speak this truth and move to act in ways that balance this inequity.

Voice 1: I believe that we are afraid AND

Voice 2: I believe that we can lean on each other and God for courage to face anything.

Voice 1: We believe, even when we are discouraged.

All: We believe, that when we are discouraged, raising our voices for justice will bring about more love in the world!

Prayers in the Stillness

Meet me in the stillness, Lord Be the air I breathe

Meet me in the stillness, Lord Free me to receive

Prayers of the People

Rev. Pam Cochrane

Offering & Doxology

Believe, with a hopeful heart!

Believe, and shine your light!

Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ his son. And now let the weak say, "I am strong;"

let the poor say, "I am rich because of what our God has done for us." Believe!

Benediction

We wait for justice but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health but we do not wait to work to heal;

We wait for wholeness but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;

We wait for peace but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news that the light has dawned and shines on all people, fill the night left by sadness with messages of peace. Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that peace alive in you and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation. Raise your voices and repeat after me... "do not be afraid!" "do not be afraid!" Amen!

Postlude

Robert Humphreville

Memorial Christmas Gifts have been received in loving memory of:

Bruce R. Turner

James P. Grigg

Henry & Bertha Tongue

Bill Hayward

Lorne Hersey

Kim Hersey

E. Philip & Ethel Littlefield

Merwin & Burdette Hathaway

Walter & Virginia Birnie Kisiel

Bruce A. Birnie

Rachel L. Corbin

Announcements & Events

Calendar of Events

Sunday, Dec 20 at 10am: Fourth Sunday of Advent Morning Worship

Sunday, Dec 20 at 12pm: Zoom Story Time with Pastor Pam

Thursday, Dec 24 at 5pm: Carols & Lessons Worship Service

Thursday, Dec 24 at 10pm: Late Night Christmas Eve Worship

(both will be available online at 4pm)

Friday, Dec 25 at 3pm: Christmas Day Connection on Zoom

Sunday, Dec 27 at 10am: First Sunday after Christmas Worship

Email the Church Office or Pastor Pam for the Zoom meeting links:

info@maplestreetchurch.org

revpammsc@gmail.com



World Service Christmas Tree Fund

On Sunday, Dec 20th, immediately after the worship service, drive to the church parking lot where members of the World Service Committee will help you hang your star on the tree and collect your donation. Cash and checks (made out to Maple Street Church) are both welcome! If you don't have a star to hang, we will have cards you can sign and hang. Plan to bring some cocoa or coffee and cookies to enjoy while we sing carols from our cars (windows up, so you'll have to sing loudly). The money raised this year will go to Beverly Bootstraps.



Sunday Flowers

Giving flowers in celebration or in memory of a loved one is a wonderful way to commemorate them and beautify the sanctuary. We have an open date in the flower schedule for Sunday, February 28th. Anyone interested can call Peggy Kuzma (978-998-5007) or Bev Hayward (978-774-5154).



**Virtual
Prayer & Table
Tuesdays at 6pm**

via Zoom if interested email Pastor Pam:
revpammsc@gmail.com



**Drop In & Conversation
with the Pastors**

Wednesdays at 12noon via Zoom

Email the Church Office or Pastor Pam for the
Zoom meeting links:
info@maplestreetchurch.org
revpammsc@gmail.com



**Wednesday
Bible Study
12noon**

via Zoom if interested email Pastor Pam:
revpammsc@gmail.com