Order for the Public Worship of God  
December 20, 2020  
4th Sunday of Advent  
11:00 AM Worship Service

WE COME TO WORSHIP

OPENING VOLUNTARY  
“O Come, All Ye Faithful”  
Jubilation Handbells  
arr. Douglas E. Wagner

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”  
Piano and Organ  
arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP  
“Love Came Down at Christmas”  
Stephanie Carson, Soloist  
GARTAN

Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;  
Worship we our Jesus, but where-wit for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine;  
love to God and all men, love for plea and gift and sign.

Text by Christina G. Rossetti, 1895

PRAYER OF THE DAY  
Paul Means, Associate Pastor

CAROL #119  
“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”  
MENDELSSOHN

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king,  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”

Joyful, all ye nations rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb.

Veiled in flesh the God head see; hail the incarnate deity,  
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king!”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king!”

THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE  
Lighting the Candle, Kevin, Laura, Shannon & Liam O’Leary

The reader offers words about the candle of love.

RESPONSE  
Reader: ….and so we offer this mysterious prayer:

All:  
Lord Jesus, into our darkness, quickly come.

All singing:  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Together)
While we ask, Lord, for the most meaningful Advent season ever, we sadly confess having done so little with so much. Forgive us Lord, for not bending the knee, for not reading your Word, for not searching our hearts, for not facing our sins. Grant that when Christmas morning comes to us, we may have a fresh resolve to live to the praise of Christ’s glory. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE
Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth;
you who sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the new born king!

SOLO
“How Far Away”
Sarah Flaherty, Soloist

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

CAROL #140 “Once in Royal David’s City”
Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.
He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and weak and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.
And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

WE GROW IN THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

SERMON Advent Series: The World Is Not Yet Finished
#4 “Turning Towards Love”
Chris Curvin, Pastor

WE GO OUT TO SERVE

CAROL #123 “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”
It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King”:
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angel sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever circling years shall come the time for told,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY “Toccata on MENDELSSOHN” Joel Raney
(Hark! The Herald Angels Sing)

Stephanie Carson, Music Director
Tom Huffman, Organist & Associate Music Director
119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born king.
2 Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the ever-lasting Lord,
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!

Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.

Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,

with the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.

Brought together in the mid-19th century, the text and tune of this familiar carol began in quite different forms. The text had ten stanzas and began, “Hark, how all the welkin rings.” The tune was created for a festival celebrating Gutenberg’s introduction of moveable type.

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.
MUSIC: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; arr. William Hayman Cummings, 1855

MENDELSSOHN
7,7,7,7,7.D with refrain
Once in Royal David's City

1 Once in royal David's city stood a lowly
   cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby in a
   manager for his bed; Mary was that mother
   mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven who is God and
   Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his
   cradle was a stall; with the poor and meek and
   lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 Jesus is our childhood's pattern; day by day like
   us he grew; he was little, weak and helpless; tears and
   smiles like us he knew; and he feels for all our
   sadness, and he shares in all our gladness.

4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re-
   deem ing love; for that child so dear and gentle is our
   to the place where he is gone.
1 It came upon the mid-night clear, that glorious song of old,
2 Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
4 And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
5 For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,

from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world:
beneath the heaven-ly hymn have rolled two thou-sand years of wrong;
who toil a long the climb-ing way with pain-ful steps and slow,
when with the ev-er-cir-cling years shall come the time fore-told,

"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gra-cious King":
above its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hover-ing wing,
and we at war on earth hear not the tid-ings that they bring;
look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing:
when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,

The "it" of the first line of this text by a Unitarian minister does not refer to the birth of Jesus, but to "that glorious song of old," the angelic tidings of peace on earth. The restored third stanza laments how often the noise of human strife has obscured that message.
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing,
and ever o'er its Ba-bel sounds the bless-ed angels sing.
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!
O, rest beside the wea-ry road, and hear the angels sing.
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.