

Durham Mennonite Church

December 10, 2023



Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church

Second Sunday of Advent!

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, in the midst of our busy time, when we are in the rush to Christmas, you burst into our lives with the tantalizing promise of something new. Open our hearts and spirits to the glorious possibilities of hope and peace to come. Help us to prepare our lives to receive you. We thank you for all the blessings you pour on us and for the privilege we have in sharing these blessings with others. Be with us all this day and all these days that we may serve you better by helping others in need. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH & CALL TO WORSHIP

L: In the middle of dark times, our Lord cries out:

P: “Comfort, comfort my people!”

L: When it seems as though we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel,

P: Our Lord says to us, “ Be at peace, for your time of difficulty has ended.”

L: Lord, we await the time of comfort and peace!

P: Lord, we are thankful for your compassion

and never-failing love for us. AMEN.

Hymn - VT#218 Come, thou long expected Jesus

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Come, thou universal Savior
Come redeem the human race
Life and joy spring from Thy favor
Cheer each soul in need of grace.
Still we wait for thine appearing
Make our senseless struggles cease.
Guide us from our wearing wandering
Into paths of perfect peace.

Born thy people to deliver,

Born a child, and yet a King,
Born to reign in us for ever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.

Hymn - VT#212 Comfort Comfort Ye My People

Comfort, comfort O my people,
Speak of peace, now says our God.
Comfort those who sit in shadows,
Mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak unto Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them.
Tell of all the sins I cover,
and that warfare now is over.

Hark, the voice of one who's crying
in the desert far and near,
bidding all to full repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Valleys, rise in exaltation;
hills, bow down in adoration!

Oh, make straight what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits a holy reign.
For the glory of our God
now o'er earth is shed abroad
And all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Grace

Into the dark depths of our fear and anguish,
You, O Lord, reach out to us.

We need your guidance this day,
for we have found it far too easy
to stray into selfish pathways.

We seek first our own comfort;
and proclaim that all is right with the world,
yet our hearts feel strangely dis comforted.

Guide us and gather us, Lord.

Teach us again to be people of peace and hope.
Help us to cast off greed and hatred.

Forgive us for the many times
when we have ignored the cries of the needy;
when we have turned our backs
on opportunities to help others.

Forgive us, Lord.

Touch our hearts and bring your bright light of
salvation to them that we might turn again to
you and in your love may be part of ministries
of peace and justice. Help us again to hear the

voice of one who cries in the wilderness,
“Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in
the desert a highway for our God.” **In the name
of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we offer this
prayer. AMEN.**

Assurance of Grace

God’s forgiving love has been poured upon
each one of us. Hear the good news! You are
healed and forgiven! AMEN.

Hymn - VT# 215 Oh How Shall I Receive Thee

1 Oh, how shall I receive thee,
how meet thee on thy way,
bless’d hope of ev’ry nation,
my soul’s delight and stay?

O Jesus, Jesus, give me now
by thine own pure light
to know whate'er is pleasing
and welcome in thy sight.

2 Love caused thine incarnation;
Love brought thee here to me.
Thy thirst for my salvation
procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling,
that led thee to embrace,
in love, all love excelling,
our troubled human race.

3 Thou comest, Christ, with gladness,
in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness

and bid our fears be still.

We welcome thee, our Savior;

come gather us to thee,

that in thy light eternal

our joyous home may be.

Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-11

God's People Are Comforted

40 Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the
LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our
God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵ Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry out!”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,

O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

¹⁰ See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

1 LORD, you were favorable to your land;

you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;

you pardoned all their sin.

8 Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,

for he will speak peace to his people,

to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,

that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;

righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,

and righteousness will look down from the sky.

12 The LORD will give what is good,

and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness will go before him,

and will make a path for his steps.

2 Peter 3:8-15a

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the

Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand

years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his

promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with

you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to

repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a

thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud

noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Final Exhortation and Doxology

14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him

Mark 1:1-8 *The Proclamation of John the Baptist*

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,^c

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,^d

who will prepare your way;

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’ ”

4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed

with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. **8** I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Sermon - Here is Your God: Comfort, Transformation and Commission in Advent

Laura Kelly

Congregational Response

Sharing Praises and Prayer Concerns

Prayers of God's People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name;
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn - Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Great David's greater son!
Hail in the hour appointed,
His reign on earth begin!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

He comes with succor speedy
To those who suffer wrong;
To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for sighing
Their darkness turned to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Are precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
 Upon the fruitful earth;
And love, joy, hope like flowers
 Spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains
 Shall peace, the herald, go;
And righteousness, in fountains
 From hill to valley flow.

O'er every foe victorious
 He on his throne shall rest
From age to age more glorious
 All blessing and all blest.
The tide of time shall never
 His covenant remove;
His name shall stand forever;
 That name to us is love.

SENDING

God is bringing light to our darkness.

We are called to go into the world,
confident in God's loving presence,
to serve others in need.

Go, bringing hope and peace
to this darkened world.

Go in God's love. AMEN.