

Durham Mennonite Church

December 24, 2023



Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church

Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve!

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH & CALL TO WORSHIP (*Psalm 96:1-8*)

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations,
**his marvelous works among all the
peoples.**

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be
praised;

he is to be revered above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the
peoples, **ascribe to the Lord glory and
strength.**

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his
name;

**bring an offering, and come into his
courts.**

VT #259 - To Us a Child of Hope is Born

**1 To us a child of hope is born,
to us a son is giv'n.**

**Him shall the tribes of earth obey,
him all the hosts of heav'n,
him shall the tribes of earth obey,
him all the hosts of heav'n.**

**2 His name shall be the Prince of
peace,
forevermore adored,
the Wonderful, the Counselor,
the great and mighty Lord,
the Wonderful, the Counselor,
the great and mighty Lord.**

**3 His pow'r, increasing, still shall
spread,
his reign no end shall know.
Justice shall guard his throne above,
and peace abound below,
justice shall guard his throne above,
and peace abound below.**

VT #265 - Angels from the Realms of Glory

**1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth.
As you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth;
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**2 Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light;
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

3 Sages, leave your contemplations—

**brighter visions beam afar.
Seek the great desire of nations,
guided by his natal star;
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**4 Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
shall behold God's love unending:
Christ will once again appear;
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**VT #248, It Came Upon a Midnight
Clear**

**1 It came upon a 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 gracious King.”**

**The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.**

**2 Still through the cloven skies they
come,**

**with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav’nly music floats
o’er all the weary world.**

**Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov’ring wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
the world has suffered long;**

**beneath the heav'nly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong,
and warring humankind hears not
the tidings which they bring.
O hush the noise and cease your strife
and hear the angels sing.**

**4 And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
Look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing.**

**5 For lo, the days are hast'ning on,
by prophet bards foretold,**

**when with the ever-circling years
comes round the age of gold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world sends back the song
which now the angels sing.**

Confession of Sin & Assurance of Grace

(from Psalm 97)

The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side. His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the

earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.

We confess, O God, that we have worshiped creatures, false images of ourselves, and boasted our confidence in worthless idols. Yet what is good in all creatures reflects only your glory. We have not always been faithful nor rejected evil's power, and are put to shame. Forgive us, lead us again to righteousness, so we may thank you in joy.

Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O God. For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. Light dawns

for the righteous, and joy for the upright
in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you
righteous, and give thanks to his holy
name!

VT #245 - O Little Town of Bethlehem

**1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**2 For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep**

**their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing—let “Glory!” ring
with peace to all on earth!**

**3 How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of the heav'ns.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him
still
the dear Christ enters in.**

**4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray,**

**cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today!**

**We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell.**

**O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.**

Scriptures

Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their

oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 62:10-12

Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up

the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples. The Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord"; and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

Christmas Carols

Titus 3:4-8

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone.

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great

God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Christmas Carols

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He

went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a

child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among people with whom he is pleased!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The

shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reflection **Spencer Bradford**

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, VT#252 - Go Tell It on the
Mountain**

Refrain:

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens**

there shone a holy light. [Refrain]

**2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.**

[Refrain]

**3 Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.**

[Refrain]

SENDING

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth,
peace. Go to live as people pleasing to
God, to share his peace.