

# **Durham Mennonite Church**

December 31, 2023



**Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church**

# **WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Eternal God, giver of life. Be with us today as we gather for worship and prepare our hearts for this New Year. May your Holy Spirit be our Light, our Guide, and our Comforter. Be our Strength, our Courage, and our Sanctifier always. Amen.

## **LIGHTING ADVENT WREATH & CHRIST CANDLE**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP (*Isaiah 46:12-13, 3-4*)**

Listen to me, you stubborn of heart,  
you who are far from righteousness:  
I bring near my righteousness;  
it is not far off, and my salvation will not  
delay;

I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.  
Listen to me, O house of Jacob,  
all the remnant of the house of Israel,  
who have been borne by me  
from before your birth, carried from the  
womb;  
even to your old age I am he,  
and to gray hairs I will carry you.  
I have made, and I will bear;  
I will carry and will save.

## **Hymn - VT #223 Blessed Be the God of Israel**

**1 Bless'd be the God of Israel,  
who comes to set us free,  
who visits and redeems us,  
and grants us liberty!  
The prophets spoke of mercy,  
of freedom and release,**

**God shall fulfill the promise  
to bring our people peace.**

**2 Now from the house of David  
a child of grace is giv'n,  
a Savior comes among us  
to raise us up to heav'n.  
Before him goes the herald,  
forerunner in the way,  
the prophet of salvation,  
the harbinger of day.**

**3 On all by death imprisoned  
the sun begins to rise,  
the dawning of forgiveness  
upon the sinner's eyes,  
to guide the feet of pilgrims**

**along the paths of peace.  
Oh, bless our God and Savior  
with songs that never cease!**

**Hymn - VT #255 Love Came down at  
Christmas**

**1 Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas;  
star and angels gave the sign.  
Sing noel, sing noel, sing noel.**

**2 Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
worship we our Jesus,  
but wherewith for sacred sign?  
Sing noel, sing noel, sing noel.**

**3 Love shall be our token;  
love be yours and love be mine;  
love to God and others,  
love for plea and gift and sign.  
Sing noel, sing noel, sing noel.**

## **Confession of Sin & Assurance of Grace**

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in darkness.

**We confess that we have not welcomed the light, or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst, to your majesty among the humble and poor, expecting little and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness**

**of your grace, and live in the truth of Christ the Lord.**

Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"<sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

**Hymn- 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.



## **Scriptures**

### ***Isaiah 62:1-3***

<sup>1</sup> For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. <sup>2</sup> The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. <sup>3</sup> You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

### ***Ezekiel 10:3-5, 15-19***

Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house, when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court. <sup>4</sup> And the glory of the LORD went up from

the cherub to the threshold of the house, and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

<sup>15</sup> And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the Chebar canal. <sup>16</sup> And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them. And when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels did not turn from beside them. <sup>17</sup> When they stood still, these stood still, and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

<sup>18</sup> Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. <sup>19</sup> And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.

### ***Galatians 4:4-7***

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup> And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying,

“Abba! Father!”<sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

### ***Luke 2:21-40***

<sup>21</sup> And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. <sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose

name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation <sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to

all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

**Sermon** - 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# 258 Love Has Come**

Love has come, a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem  
skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it.  
Hear how their song of joy arises:



Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

Love is born! Come share in the  
wonder.

Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of His mother.  
What is the name her heart is saying?  
Love! Love! Love is the name she  
whispers.

Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come, He never will leave us!  
Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us.  
Love is the peace our hearts are  
seeking.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of  
Christmas.

Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!

**SENDING (from Psalm 148)**

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!

**Praise him, all his angels;**

**praise him, all his hosts!**

Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and maidens together,  
old men and children!

**Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;**

**his majesty is above earth and  
heaven.**

Now, Lord, let your servants depart in  
peace.