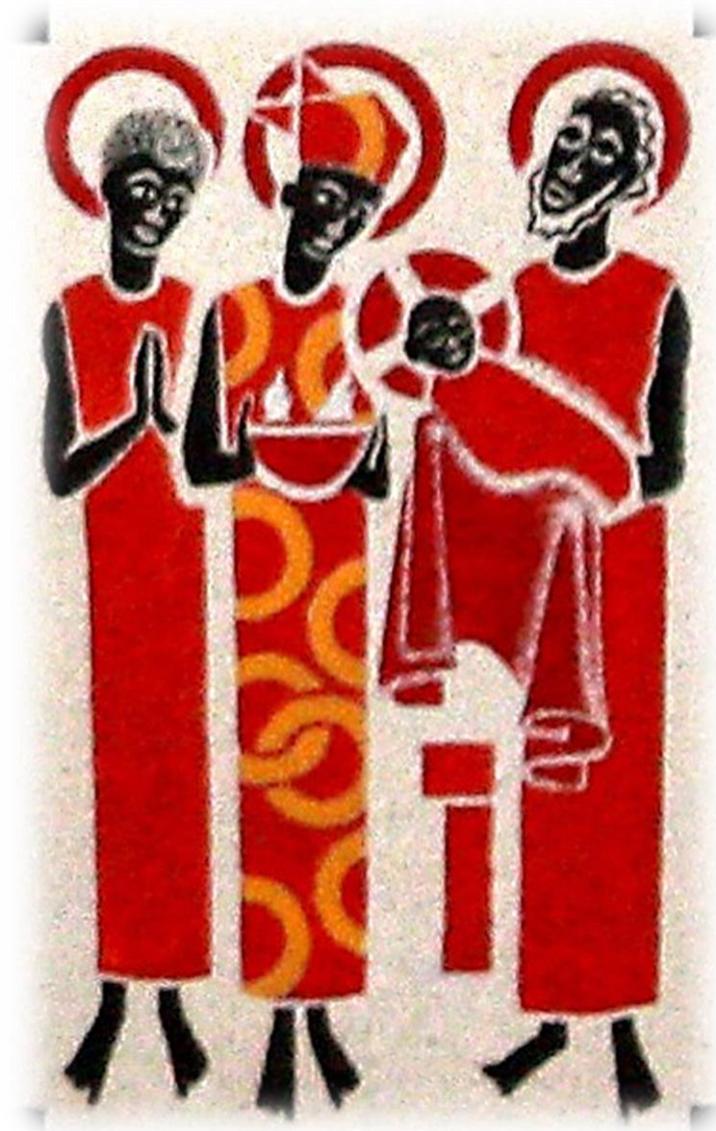


First Presbyterian Church of Monroe
First Sunday of Christmas
December 27, 2020



“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.”

Luke 2: 22, *NRSV*

WE GATHER
“Believe This: The Time Has Come”

Prelude

Welcome

Diane Adams, Liturgist

The Good News that we have proclaimed for this Advent/Christmas season ends with a second chapter of Luke that starts, “When the time came...” Indeed, the time has come for us to move from the narrative of birthing to the narrative of redemption. The story of Jesus’ ritual cleansing as a child contains stories of people who had been waiting for this moment. But the time of waiting is over—for us too. Like Isaiah who says, “for Zion’s sake I won’t stay silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I won’t sit still,” we will not stop our songs of resistance until justice shines out like a light for all.

Threshold Music

“I Believe”

verse 1

I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it’s not shining.

I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it’s not shining.

Prayer

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Holy One,

we thank you for the glimpses we have caught
throughout this season of Advent and Christmas
of your gifts of hope, love, joy, and peace.

Even in the midst of fear,
of challenge, of struggle—
even when we have not been sure of tomorrow,
you have ignited the Light within us,

People: ... and we have glowed with its brilliance from the inside out.

People Sing:

**I believe in the sun,
I believe in the sun,
even when... even when...
it’s not shining.**

Pastor: *Pastor:* Help us continue to proclaim far and wide
that the Christ, the light of the world has come and dwells among all people. **Amen.**

Pastor: You are invited to light your Advent candles of Hope, Love, Joy, Peace, and the
Christ candle at this time.

People: Amen.

Opening Hymn**“Angels, From the Realms of Glory”**

GTG 143

- 1 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 newborn King!
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields 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; you have seen his natal star: come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King!
- 4 All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son, evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One: come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King!

Call to Confession

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Prayer of Confessionⁱ

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

O God, in Christ you were born a humble child, love-made-flesh, God with us. Forgive us when we fail to follow in your way of humility, love, and peace. Free us to see your Light reflected in the faces of enemies, friends, family, neighbors, and strangers. Let us shine with your Light, the Light of Love. Amen.

*Silent Confession***Declaration of Forgiveness****Passing the Peace**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

WE PROCLAIM***Children's Time to Shine****“This Little Light of Mine”*

Ann Lux

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3 (CEB)

I surely rejoice in the Lord;
my heart is joyful because of my God,
because he has clothed me with clothes of victory,
wrapped me in a robe of righteousness
like a bridegroom in a priestly crown,
and like a bride adorned in jewelry.

As the earth puts out its growth,
and as a garden grows its seeds,
so the Lord God will grow righteousness
and praise before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I won't keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I won't sit still
until her righteousness shines out like a light,
and her salvation blazes like a torch.

Nations will see your righteousness,
all kings your glory.
You will be called by a new name,
which the Lord's own mouth will determine.
You will be a splendid garland in the Lord's hand,
a royal turban in the palm of God's hand.

The Witness of Music

Diane Adams, Liturgist

Someday, we will once again be able to join our voices in song in our sanctuary loud and clear. But with the help of all these people, we turned toward the story of music and deepened our appreciation of its role in healing, change, and reconciliation. And we will never look at music the same again... certainly we will not take it for granted.

Our last anthem for this series is one that reminds us that there is work for us to do. After the Christmas carols have faded and we move on toward some sense of new life, we will have much to do to continue to rebuild lives. African American theologian, Howard Thurman, said,

“When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flock,
the work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among others,
to make music in the heart.”

“God Has Work for Us to Do”

by Mark A. Miller

Gospel Reading

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Luke 2: 22-40 (CEB)

When the time came for their ritual cleansing, in accordance with the Law from Moses, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (It’s written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord.”) They offered a sacrifice in keeping with what’s stated in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn’t die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple area. Meanwhile, Jesus’ parents brought the child to the temple so that they could do what was customary under the Law. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

“Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word,
because my eyes have seen your salvation.
You prepared this salvation in the presence of all peoples.
It’s a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and a glory for your people Israel.”

His father and mother were amazed by what was said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “This boy is assigned to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that generates opposition so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your innermost being too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, who belonged to the tribe of Asher. She was very old. After she married, she lived with her husband for seven years. She was now an 84-year-old widow. She never left the temple area but worshipped God with fasting and prayer night and day. She approached at that very moment and began

to praise God and to speak about Jesus to everyone who was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Mary and Joseph had completed everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown, Nazareth in Galilee. The child grew up and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

WE RESPOND

Litany of Belief

Diane Adams, Liturgist

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

Leader: I believe that we have failed to see Christ AND

***People:* I believe that we can wake up and serve him by serving others.**

I believe that we have waited for someone else to rescue us AND

I believe that we can be the change we want to see.

I believe that we have hidden the light for too long AND

I believe that the light can shine whenever we open ourselves to be Christ's presence in the world.

We believe, even when we are discouraged.

**We believe, that when we are discouraged,
raising our voices for justice will offer
more hope
more love
more joy
more peace
and more light!
Amen!**

Prayers in the Stillness

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Pastor: I invite you to get in a comfortable position of rest.

I invite you to get as quiet and still as you can.

I invite you to a deep breath and a deep listening posture—
perhaps eyes closed—

or fixed on a candle—

or focused on the visual images that will be shared during the music
as we prepare our mind, body and spirit for a time of prayer.

Music

"Stillness"

Mark Miller and Lindy Thompson

The gentle pull of God
is often lost amidst the rush
of all the obligations which lay a claim on us.

Yet just beyond the frantic pace
our restless feet have trod
lie deep still pools of quietness—
the dwelling place of God.

Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive

O take me to that secret place
where lost in wonder and in awe,
the moment comes and I rejoice
to be and be with God.

Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive

**The Prayers of the People
The Lord's Prayer**

Sung Coda: Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive, to receive.

Offering Announcement

Diane Adams, Liturgist

Doxology*tune of "Give Thanks" GTG 647*

Believe, with a joyful heart!
Believe, and shine your light!
Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!

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!

WE GO FORTH

Introduction to the Carol

Diane Adams, Liturgist

This carol was written in 1962 by Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Inspired by seeing babies pushed in strollers in New York City while the dire threat of nuclear war loomed, Noel wrote, “said the night wind to the little lamb, “and “pray for peace, people everywhere.” The “star dancing in the night with a tail as big as a kite” can be interpreted as the star of Bethlehem but also what a nuclear missile looks like in flight. The composers said in an interview later that it was difficult to actually sing the song that year without crying. Indeed, our prayers for peace continue and the need to protect the children of the world and secure a future for them are as dire as ever. As the last song in our series, let us sing this Carol of Resistance, “a song high above the trees” with our voices “big as the sea.”

Carol of Resistance

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Said the night wind to the little lamb. Do you see what I see.
Way up in the sky little lamb. Do you see what I see.
A star, a star. Dancing in the night.
With a tail as big as a kite. With a tail as big as a kite.

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy. Do you hear what I hear.
(Do you hear what I hear). Ringing through the sky shepherd boy.
Do you hear what I hear. (Do you hear what I hear)

A song, a song. High above the trees.
With a voice as big as the sea. With a voice as big as the sea.

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king. Do you know what I know.
In your palace wall mighty king. Do you know what I know.
(Do you know what I know)

A child, a child. Shivers in the cold.
Let us bring him silver and gold. Let us bring him silver and gold.

Said the king to the people everywhere. Listen to what I say.
(Listen to what I say)

Pray for peace people everywhere. Listen to what I say.
(Listen to what I say)

The child, the child. Sleeping in the night.
He will bring us goodness and light. He will bring us goodness and light.
He will bring us goodness and light.

Pastor: You are invited to pick up one or more of the candles Hold them high for the
Benediction:

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 we believe that good will prevail,
fill the night left by sadness with light.
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that goodness 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!”

People: “do not be afraid!” Amen!

Handbell Benediction

Postlude

ⁱ Prayer of Confession adapted from *Call to Worship, Lectionary Aids for 2002-2021, Year B. Volume 54.1*, p..34

Art Work: Saget, Father Georges. Presentation in the Temple, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56344>. Original source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KeurMoussaAutel.jpg>.

FPC Monroe Worship Team

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler, Pastor
Rob Edwards, Minister of Music
Diane Adams, Liturgist
Ann Lux, Children's Time
Dean Tartaglia, Guest Soloist
Isaac Fankhauser, Sound Team
Josh McMann, Sound Team
Randy Stiffler, Sound Team



108 Washington Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161
734-242-1545