

The Falls Village Congregational Church

December 24, 2023 10:00 a.m.

4th Sunday in Advent

The Reverend Richard W. Reifsnyder, Worship Leader

Welcome and Announcements

Ringling of the Church Bell

Prelude – *Of the Father's Love Begotten* - arr. P. Rodriguez

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO PRAISE

Call to Worship (from Isaiah 9)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

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,

The Prince of Peace..

Prayer for God's Presence:

Loving Savior, we wait for your coming. The house has been decorated. The tree is trimmed. There are presents under the tree. The guests have been invited. The ingredients for a sumptuous meal have been purchased. Now fill us with an overflowing love for you and for one another. Come into our waiting hearts and prepare us to welcome you as we celebrate the day of your birth. Amen.

Hymn #142 “*People Look East*”

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, light of the world, you caused light to shine out of darkness in the advent of Jesus our Christ; you constantly open to us the ways we are to prepare. We confess our unwillingness to see the light and to walk in your ways. We have not always opened our eyes to the needs of others, and our feet have wandered from the paths of justice and peace. We ask that the spirit of Christ

be born anew within us, that our hearts be stirred to glorify the nativity with acts of compassion and service. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Responsive Reading – The Peaceful Realm, #126

Gloria Patri

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

Let us pass the peace of Christ.

TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Susan Kelsey and Sherry Newman

#121 “*Prepare the Way of the Lord*” 2x

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Rich Reifsnyder

Prayer

Sermon: “What’s in a Promise?” Rev. Dr. Richard Reifsnyder

TO RESPOND IN FAITH

The Offertory -- *Rise Up, Shepherd and Follow* - arr. G. Gilpin

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

THE CHURCH DISPERSES TO SERVE

Closing Hymn: #143 “*Joy to the World*”

Benediction

Benediction Response (gather in a circle around the sanctuary)

God Be with You till We Meet Again

.....
You are invited to place your offerings as you leave in the plate at either entrance to the church.

142

People, Look East

1. Peo - ple, look east, the time is near of the
 2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
 3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more
 4. An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who

crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley

a - ble, trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.

Peo - ple, look east and sing to - day:
 Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 Love, the Star, is on the way.
 Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

126

The Peaceful Realm

RESPONSE

Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath sprung!

R

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
 and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
 the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 the spirit of counsel and might,
 the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
 He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
 or decide by what his ears hear;
 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
 and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
 he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
 and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
**Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
 and faithfulness the belt around his loins.** R

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
 the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
 the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
 and a little child shall lead them.
 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
 and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
 They will not hurt or destroy
 on all my holy mountain;
 for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
 as the waters cover the sea. R

The Fourth Sunday of Advent – The Candle of Love

Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ.
More and more candles, more and more light,
as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Today we relight the candles of hope, peace, and joy (relight two purple and the pink candles) and light the candle of love. Love truly makes the world go round, the love of God, selfless and sacrificial, poured into our hearts. The ancients commented about the first Christians, “see how they love one another,” and at our best it is still true.

(Light the 4th (purple) candle)

Listen to God’s promises made to the lineage of David in 2 Samuel 7: 8-10, 16

⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more... ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Let us pray together

God of Promise, come into our darkness.

**Renew your hope, your peace, your joy, your love in us,
for you alone bring life out of death.**

Song: “Prepare the Way of the Lord” J. Berthier (Taizé Community)

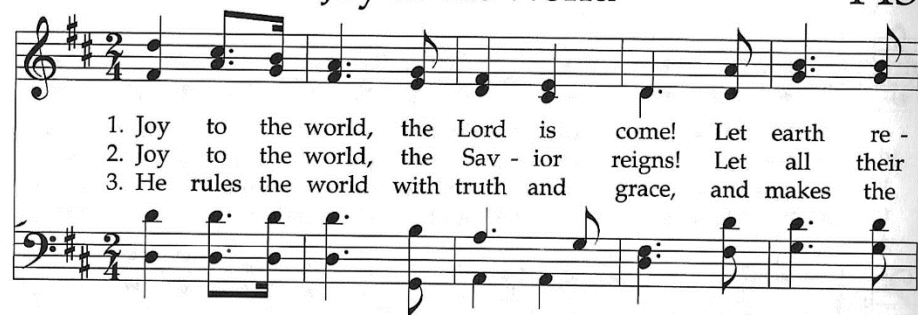
***Prepare the way of the Lord, Prepare the way of the Lord
And all the people will see the salvation of our God (2x)***

LUKE 1: 26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Joy to the World


143



1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 songs em - ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,



and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

And heaven and na - ture sing, and
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 And won - ders of his love, and



sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing