



FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.



**Fairlawn Avenue United Church
Advent IV
Sunday, December 22, 2024
10:30am**

**Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts
Eleanor Daley, Director of Music
Fairlawn Avenue Senior Choir**

2.

*Indicates when the congregation is to stand, as able.

Congregational responses, singing and readings in unison are indicated in bold text.

Welcome and Acknowledgements

Advent Candle ~ Love

(An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt.)

Reading

Laura Ziliotto and family

It's an old story,
Where families live in fear of violence
And must find their way
through an unfamiliar wilderness.
to a place where guns are not traded like cards
and what you wear means nothing
except liking how it looks.
And children are not at risk
of being traded like toys.
We speak of Jesus and Joseph and Mary as the Holy Family,
a displaced family.
All families are holy, unique,
cherished by the Creator.
We light a candle this day for all families who must journey
somewhere else in search of love.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Lighting of the final purple candle in the Advent Wreath ~ Love

***Processional Hymn** Angels, From the Realms of Glory

VU #36 (verses 1, 2 and 3)

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

**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.***

**Sages, leave your contemplations;
 brighter visions beam afar;
 seek the great desire of nations;
 ye have seen his natal star:
*come and worship, come and worship,
 worship Christ, the newborn King.***

***Gathering Litany[1] Open Our Eyes**

Open our eyes, O Holy One,
 especially if they are half-shut
 because we are tired of looking
 or half-open because we fear to see too much,
 or bleared with tears
 because yesterday today and tomorrow
 are filled with the same pain,
 or contracted,
 because we only look at what we want to see.

Open our eyes, O Holy One,
 to gently scan the life we lead,
 the home we have,
 the world we inhabit,
 and so to find,
 among the greyness,
 signs of hope we can fasten on and encourage.

***Give us, whose eyes are dimmed by familiarity,
 a bigger vision of what you can do
 even with hopeless cases and lost causes
 and people of limited ability.***

[silence]

4. Show us the world as in your sight,
riddled by debt, deceit and disbelief,
yet also shot through with
possibility for recovery, renewal, redemption,

Teach us to distinguish vision from fantasy,
and today, tomorrow, this week, open our eyes
to one person or one place
where we—being even for a moment prophetic—
might indentify and wean a potential in the waiting.

***With all this, open our eyes, in yearning,
for Jesus.***

On the mountains
In the cities
Through the corridors of power
And streets of despair
To help, to heal,
To confront, to convert;

O come, O come, Immanuel.

***Introit**

On This Day Earth Shall Ring

E. Daley

On this day earth shall ring
with the song children sing
to the Son, Christ the King.
Born on earth to save us,
peace and love He gave us.
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo.
(Trad. Swedish)

Scriptures

Micah 5:2-5

New Revised Standard Version

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labour has brought forth;
 then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.
 And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
 in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth,
 and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
 and tread upon our soil,
 we will raise against them seven shepherds
 and eight rulers.

Luke 1:39-45

New Revised Standard Version

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Lillian Lucas – Anne Sanders Student Assistance Awards

Presenter: Derek Wishart

Anthem

Mid-winter

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

In the bleak mid-winter,
 frosty wind made moan;
 earth stood hard as iron,
 water like a stone;
 snow had fallen, snow on snow,
 snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid-winter
 long ago.

6.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him,
nor earth sustain,
heaven and earth shall flee away
when He comes to reign:
in the bleak mid-winter
a stable place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.

Angels and Archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
but only His Mother
in her maiden bliss
worshipped the Belovèd
with a kiss.

What can I give Him,
poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
yet what I can I give Him,
give my heart.
(Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894)

Reflection "We Are Suspicious of Angles"

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

***Hymn** Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

VU #8

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming,
as seers of old have sung.
It came a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
she bore for us a Saviour
when half spent was the night.**

Passing of the Peace

Introduction of the Offering

Offertory Anthem Christmas Lullaby

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Clear in the darkness a light shines in Bethlehem:
angels are singing, their sound fills the air.
Wise men have journeyed to greet their Messiah;
but only a mother and baby lie there.

*'Ave Maria, Ave Maria': hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria, maiden, and mother of Jesus our King'.*

Where are his courtiers, and who are his people?
Why does he bear neither sceptre nor crown?
Shepherds his courtiers, the poor for his people,
with peace as his sceptre and love for his crown. *R*

What though your treasures are not gold or incense?
Lay them before him with hearts full of love.
Praise to the Christ child, and praise to his mother
who bore us a Saviour by grace from above. *R*
(John Rutter)

***Presentation of the Offering**

E. Daley

(The choir will sing through once, and then the congregation is invited to join in.)

**Come, Light of lights, come shine upon us,
Come, touch our hearts, we long for you.
Come, touch our lives, come and renew us,
Come to us, Emmanuel.**

Advent Litany[2] We Suspect Angels

***We suspect angels
And disbelieve good news.***

Eternal and Holy One
in the long ago days
when the earth was flat
and heaven was above the clouds
and disease was caused by demons
your child was born to lighten all our darkness.

We now, after the enlightenment
are in bondage to different limitations.

We doubt what we cannot prove
We ignore what we cannot see
And finding little room for faith
We must confess

***We suspect angels
And disbelieve good news.***

We admit we are infected and affected
by the spirit of our times.

Behind talk of world peace
we hear machinery of war;
beneath talk of global equity
we detect the posturing of the powerful;
beside talk of your church being renewed,
we recognise the bondage to failed patterns of the past.

Rather than embrace the light
we become fascinated by darkness
and must confess

***We suspect angels
And disbelieve good news.***

Holy One! Who will save us?

Our cynicism is the fruit of our experience,
not the key to the future.
Our suspiciousness helps us to smell the rat
never to recognise the dove.
Our perfect analysis may describe the mountain
but it is helpless to move it.
It is with little pride
we must confess;

***We suspect angels
And disbelieve good news.***

Christmas approaches.
Here is the gift we seek:

A share of the divine naivete
of Elizabeth and Zechariah
Mary and Joseph
Unnamed country folk;
Who encountered angels
and believed the good news
and recognised Christ among them.
Amen.

***Recessional Hymn** Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

VU #48

**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

***Sending Out**[3]

Today, tomorrow, this week, open our eyes
to one person or one place
where we—being even for a moment prophetic—
might identify and wear a potential in the waiting.

***With all this, open our eyes, in yearning,
for Jesus.***

***Choral Commissioning**

E. Daley

(The choir will sing through once, and then the congregation is invited to join in.)

**Redeemer, come! We open wide our hearts to you; here Lord, abide.
Let us your inner presence feel, your grace and love in us reveal.**

(Georg Weissel 1642, trans. Catherine Winkworth 1855, alt.)

Postlude

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[1] With permission, "Cloth to the Cradle," Wild Goose Press, [2] Ibid, [3] Ibid

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