



"Prayer" by Mike Moyers.

Christ Church **UNITED CHURCH** **OF CHRIST**

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor
Organist, Matthew Lawrenz
Pam Kothrade, Song Leader
Soloist, Nancy Charles

www.uccmke.org

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Today marks the fourth Sunday of Advent. In today's service we light the *love* candle and focus on the meaning of love. The 126th Psalm says, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream..." In the Bible the prophets, psalmists, and the whole ensemble of character in the Christmas story were dreamers. They received dreams. They discovered them. They responded to God's dream for the world. Indeed, they invite us to dream with them. Last week we heard about the joyful reunion of Mary and Elizabeth and the news of their pregnancies. This week we recognize that what preceded Mary's song of praise was news that was disorienting and life threatening. Together, Mary and Elizabeth find courage and comfort. During these challenging times of pandemic and protest, we, too, are called to carry, support, and encourage one another's dreams. Those who dream...are not alone.

**Please recite the purple words aloud.*

Prelude

Under the Starry Sky

Stamm

Words of Welcome

Opening Song

He Comes To Us As One Unknown

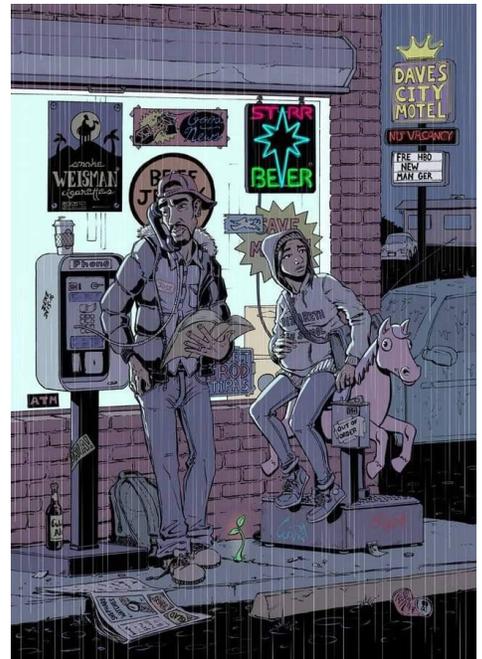
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1. He comes to us as one unknown, a breath unseen, unheard; as though within a heart of stone, or shriveled seed in darkness sown, a pulse of being stirred, a pulse of being stirred.

2. He comes when souls in silence lie and thoughts of day depart; half seen upon the inward eye, a falling star across the sky of night within the heart, of night within the heart.

3. He comes in love as once he came by flesh and blood and birth; to bear within our mortal frame a life, a death, a saving name, for every child of earth, for every child of earth.

4. He comes in truth when faith is grown; believed, obeyed, adored: the Christ in all the Scriptures shown, as yet unseen, but not unknown, our Savior and our Lord, our Savior and our Lord.



"José y Maria" by Everett Patterson.

WORDS: Timothy Dudley-Smith MUSIC: C. Hubert H. Parry

Opening Litany

One: I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my child,

All: Suddenly, joy was overflowing.

One: I knew love, but when you held my hand,

All: Suddenly, love was overflowing.

One: I knew God, but when you showed me grace,
when you forgave me,
when you loved me,
when you raised me,

All: Suddenly, God was overflowing.

One: So, let us worship Holy God together
As a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.

All: This is community.

One: This is the body of Christ.

All: Welcome home.

Candle Lighting Song

Lead Us To Your Light

Carol Browning

Lead us to your light, lead us out of darkness.

Lead us to your light. Come, Jesus, come.

Rouse us from sleep, wake us from our slumber

Banish the darkness of night.

Lead us to your light, lead us out of darkness.

Lead us to your light. Come, Jesus, come.

One: May this light be an invitation to *carry, support, and encourage one another*. May this light be our invitation to be Advent people – people who dream. Amen.

Solo

The Winter Rose

Nancy Charles

Arr. Joseph Martin

Opening Prayer

Holy God,
Before you could speak, you were
speaking –
Leaping in wombs, kicking, stretching,
jumping for joy.
You have always found a way to show
up in our midst,
Particularly on our fearful or lonely
days.
So today, as we crack open our Bibles,
Fluttering through these old beloved
pages,
We ask that you would move again.

Stir in us.
Speak to us.
Fill us with the Holy Spirit.
And if we are not able to hear your
Word clearly,
Then give us Elizabeths
Who will point out your presence in
delight and joy.
Before you could speak, you were
speaking,
So here and now, Creator God, we are
listening.
Amen.

The Gloria

Glory be to the Christ-Child,
God's strength made weak, has come to light our way.
As the Firstborn of Creation, the Alpha and Omega, wonderful birth,
God has come to earth.

Lyrics. Jacqueline A. Burnette

Old Testament

[2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16](#)

Second Samuel continues the story of King David begun in 1 Samuel. It includes his victories, the centralization of Judaism in Jerusalem, and God's promise to David of an everlasting dynasty. In this passage, God promises David will always have a son on the throne of Judah and becomes the basis for future messianic expectations.



"A Heron's Wisdom" by Lauren Wright Pittman.

King David was living in his palace. And the Lord gave him peace from all his enemies around him. David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am living in a palace made of cedar wood. But the Ark of the Covenant of God is still kept in a tent!" Nathan said to the king, "Go and do what you really want to do. The Lord is with you."

But that night the Lord spoke his word to Nathan. The Lord said, "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord says: You are not the person to build a house for me to live in. I did not live in a house when I brought the Israelites out of Egypt. I have been moving around all this time with a tent as my home. I have continued to move with the tribes of Israel. But I have never asked their leaders who take care of them to build me a house of cedar wood.' "You must tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord of heaven's armies says: I took you from the pasture when you were following the sheep. I took you to become leader of my people, the Israelites. I have been with you everywhere you have gone. I have defeated your enemies for you. I will make you as famous as any of the great men on the earth. Also I will choose a place for my people,

the Israelites. I will plant them so they can live in their own home. They will not be bothered anymore. Wicked people will no longer make them suffer as they have in the past. Wicked people continued to do this even when I appointed judges. But I will give you peace from all your enemies. I also tell you that I will make your descendants kings of Israel after you.

Poetry Prayer

Joy like Water

Sarah Are

Mary went to Elizabeth's house,
Because that's what we do when the
world falls apart.
That's what we do when the script is
flipped,
When the rug is pulled,
When it rains inside.
We go home.
We find friends.
We find love.
So Mary went to Elizabeth's house,
Harboring good news that must have
felt like water –
Something capable of helping her float
or pulling her under.
And only then,
Only there,
In the presence of a face that looked
like love,
Does the word "joy" appear.
Mary said, "How can this be?"
The angel said, "Do not be afraid."
Mary said, "May it be so."
But when Mary went to Elizabeth's
house

And Elizabeth opened the door,
Joy – like a tipped cup of water –
Spilled out everywhere.
I imagine that Elizabeth laughed.
I imagine that Mary framed her
growing belly.
I imagine that both women pressed
palms to stomach
When that baby began to kick,
A holy ritual as old as time.
I imagine that God smiled.
And I imagine, that for the first time,
Mary could float.
Isn't it always that way?
I could harbor joy to myself.
I could tuck joyful moments deep into
pockets,
Saving memories of better days for
long nights.
But when I share my joy with you,
When you open the door,
Joy spills out everywhere,
And it is love that helps me float.

New Testament

[Luke 1:26-45](#)

The Gospel according to Luke presents the story of Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises. Luke situates Jesus' birth, ministry, and resurrection as an expression of God's fidelity. The first two chapters focus on God's faithfulness to promises, especially to Jesus' mother. In this passage, we hear the story of Mary and her pregnancy with Jesus. The angels proclaim this news to Mary and tell her to not be afraid – for God is with her. Mary's relative, Elizabeth, also pregnant, provides courage and comfort for her out of love and support.

During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you." But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am a virgin!"

The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!"

Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.

Mary got up and went quickly to a town in the mountains of Judea. She went to Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She cried out in a loud voice, "God has blessed you more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to. You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! Why has something so good happened to me? When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy. You are blessed because you believed what the Lord said to you would really happen."



"A Dream Confirmed" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity.

Music Video

Those Who Dream

The Many

Music by Hannah Rand, Lyrics by Lenora Rand, ©2020 Plural Guild Music
CCLI Song #7157958

Prayer of Confession

All: God of Good News,

You say to me, "You are highly favored," but I struggle to see how that could be.

You say to me, "Do not be afraid," but I am afraid all the time.

You say to me, "Even the impossible is possible, just look at Elizabeth!"

But hope slips through my hands like water.

The impossible still feels impossible.

So today I pray,

Today we pray:

Teach us to sing like Mary.

Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth.
Teach us to trust like the angels.
Forgive us when we can only do one at a time, or none at all.
Amen.

Sermon

Those Who Dream - Love

Pastor Dan Stark

Song of Response

The King of Glory Comes

Refrain: The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

- 1. Who is the King of glory: what shall we call him? He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.**
- 2. In all of Galilee, in city or village, he goes among his people, curing their illness.**
- 3. He conquered sin and death; he truly has risen, and he will share with us his heavenly vision.**

WORDS: Willard F. Jabusch MUSIC: Israeli folk song; arr. John Ferguson

Prayers of the People

Hear Our Prayers, O God...

For health & healing: *God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.* Ps. 147:3

We pray for:

- ~The historic Black churches and their communities in Washington DC that were attacked during violent weekend protests.
- ~The expeditious delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- ~Our nation in the wake of a contentious election.
- ~Families and friends in our community for whom this time of year is challenging.
- ~The Pfeifer family as Mark and Benjamin have COVID. Benjamin seems to be bouncing back well but Mark not so much. Prayers for Susan to stay well and healthy to care for them.
- ~Brad Berger who was recuperating from COVID at home and now has Pneumonia.
- ~Bill Kroening as he recently began a series 5 radiation treatments for Prostate cancer. He is blessed they caught it early.
- ~Bob, Bill Kroening's brother who was getting well at Thanksgiving and recently has had a setback of breathing problems.
- ~Ian, Molly Pufall Brown's husband who will be having a bone marrow biopsy next Monday for something in his blood noticed in his annual physical blood work. Praying the outcome will be something simple and related to his allergies. From Molly Pufall Brown.
- ~Dave and Nancy Wareham's 90-year-old aunt who was at rehab for a post-operative stay and she contracted COVID and now has been hospitalized as her lungs are failing. Prayers for her and the family as it is a scary time for everyone. From Dave & Nancy Wareham.

~Tom, brother-in-law of Doris and Paul Mayeshiba who is suffering from ALS and as a result has become a paraplegic. Extra prayers needed as they navigate the holidays.

~Matt, brother of Doris Mayeshiba who had another spinal surgery on his neck this week and will have a 3-month recovery.

~Dawn, daughter in-law of Laurel and wife of Brad Dayton, as she recovers from a heart attack and manages diabetes and dialysis 4 times per week. Continued prayers are requested.

~Nancy Charles' work facility, as it has been struck with a COVID outbreak.

~Tracy, daughter of Nancy Kaye, who is at home with Nancy awaiting liver and kidney transplants. She is doing well.

~Pat, a friend of Pat Popp who is navigating COVID and dealing with the recent loss of her husband.

~Maureen, friend of Susie Klockow, who has breast cancer.

~Jean, sister of Doris Piacentine and her niece who is recovering from COVID and both are receiving oxygen.

~Kathy, Ken Klockow's sister who has again been hospitalized for a serious infection.

~Good friend of Sue Klockow whose husband is at Froedert hospital and her father is at the VA hospital both have COVID pneumonia.

~Dan, friend of Molly Pufall Brown, who is very sick with an undiagnosed illness. Prayers also for his wife and 2 young children.

~Kelley, friend of Nancy Charles as she receives radiation treatment for breast cancer.

~Bernee, friend of Nancy Kaye who has end-stage lung cancer.

~Joe and Laurie, son in law and daughter of Jackie Struck. Prayers for continued healing for wounds as he goes to wound care weekly.

~Family of Ken and Sue who live in California close to the wildfires.

~Julene Flanagan's nephew, who is struggling with mental health issues.

~Julene Flanagan's family member who is struggling with health issues related to kidney disease.

Prayer Song

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**O come, Desire of nations, bind all people in one heart and mind ;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Prayer of Dedication

Doxology

Tune: The First Noel

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
A-men.**

Closing Song

Wait For the Lord

Wait for the Lord whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart!

WORDS and MUSIC: Taize Community

Sending Blessing

...Go in peace. Hope. Love. And joy.

Postlude

Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow

Peeters

Some Prayers and Liturgies written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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Happy Birthday to these wonderful people!

Jim Swenson December 20

Amy Cox December 21

Brooklyn Urbaniak December 22

Noelle Simons December 23

Doris Mayeshiba December 24

Jackie Struck December 24

Journey Surak December 25

Benjamin Rondorf December 26

Advent Christmas Eve gift bags & 2021 Giving Envelopes

Christ Church members are invited to either pick up an Advent gift bag from church or have them delivered to their residence.

Joan Amich will be handing them out at church (Lenox Street door) this Sunday, December 20th, between 10:30 and noon.

The church office will also be open for pick up the week of December 21st:

Monday-Wednesday 8:00am-2:00pm and Thursday 8:00am-12:00pm.

If you would like your gift bag(s) & 2021 envelopes delivered, by socially distanced elves, we can deliver by putting them in someone's mailbox or other designated place the member requests.

Please contact the church office (414-481-3530, office@uccmke.org) to have your bag(s) personally delivered and Debbie will verify how many communion elements you require for your gift bag.

The Music and Worship Committee: Joan Amich, Dean & Pam Kothrade, Rich Tremarello and Pastor Dan

Thanks

“I wanted to thank all the members of the congregation who have written Advent devotionals. While I think we have all come to expect inspiring messages from Pastor Dan Stark I have been truly amazed by the devotionals written by the members. Your messages have been heartwarming and made this 2020 Advent season brighter.”

From Mary Ann Mowery

If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email pastor@uccmke.org.
Christ Church UCC, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

We are currently worshipping online-only. Learn more here.

<https://www.uccmke.org/covid-advent>

You can make your offering to Christ Church at www.uccmke.org/donate or by mailing a check to Christ Church, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

