

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

10:00 a.m.

The Approach to God

PRELUDE Of the Father's Love Begotten Wilbur Held

WELCOME

VOTUM

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF LOVE *(responsively)*

There are many stories

Today we tell the story of Love.

For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son into the world. God sent his son into the world not to condemn the world but to save the world.

We will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with our mouths we will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. We declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

Today we light the candle of love and remember God's faithfulness.

In the light of these candles, we wait for the coming Messiah, the light of the world. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

SALUTATION

*HYMN OF PREPARATION 61 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
(vs. 1-3 and 7)
Tune: VENI EMMANUEL

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

(The congregation may exchange the Peace.)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(in unison)*

Faithful God,

we have been waiting. Waiting for the arrival of your son, Jesus. This season we confess that we have grown impatient. We have been weary. We have not focused on the Lord's arrival but rather we have been focused on getting gifts, preparing meals, attending parties. We have spent more time on ourselves than others. We have prepared more for the celebration than for your arrival. Forgive us. Turn us toward your son in this last day. Help us to look toward you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*HYMN 57 All Earth Is Waiting
Tune: TODA LA TIERRA

The Word of God

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55

p. 56

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

“Two Stories: The King and the Virgin”

PRAYER FOR BLESSING ON THE WORD

The Response to God

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: The Nicene Creed *(in unison)*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made; of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SHARING THE GIFT OF FELLOWSHIP

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERING

OFFERTORY

My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord

Michael Praetorius,

organ interludes by Roland E. Martin My soul

doth magnify the Lord, in God my Savior shall rejoice;

He raises me from low estate. and gives a hundred blessings voice.

All generations call me blest, yes, God has done great things for me;

and Holy is his righteous name, to those who know his majesty.

His arm is strong to all who fear, the proud he scatters in their greed;
He casts the mighty from their thrones, and lifts the lowly from their need.

He fills the hungry with good things, the rich he sends away in shame;
the humble he has lifted high, to magnify his Holy Name.

Remembering His mercy sure, his servants, Israel, embrace;
as prophesied in days of old, to Abraham and all his race.

All Glory to the Father God, and to the Son, whom we adore;

The Holy Spirit, three in one, forever, and forever more.

—Luke 1:46-55, adapted by Alice Carpenter

*DOXOLOGY

965

Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power,

and the glory, forever. Amen.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION 75

Lord, You Were Rich Beyond All Splendor

Tune: FRAGRANCE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

O Savior, Tear Open the Heavens

Heinz-Walter Schmitz

*You may stand.

Worship Leaders: Rev. Dr. Ryan Boes, preaching; Rev. Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas, liturgist; George and Katherine Hunsberger, advent candle lighters; Kamerkoor; Linda Strouf, Minister of Music.

Today

We welcome all who worship with us! We invite you sign in on the fellowship pads in the pew or you may follow this QR code to sign in. We would appreciate it if you took a moment to sign in you and your family members and let us know you were here. **If you are joining us as a guest today**, please follow this QR code, or head to trcholland.org/quickstart to let us know you were here.

ASSISTING TODAY: Deacons/Ushers: Bethany Bulthuis, Laura Baer, Jim VanderMeer

IF YOU DESIRE PRAYER for yourself and/or others Jane Dalman and Phil Coray will be available to pray with you following today's worship service. Please make your way to the Place of Prayer located in the south hallway on the main level.

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP: Our Children and Worship Program for children aged 4 through the 2nd grade continues today during the 10:00 service. Our Worship Center program takes place in Room 2. (Downstairs: Take the Northwest staircase down to the lower level. The room is the first door to your right.)

Note: Education classes will not meet today or on December 31. Classes begin again on Sunday, January 7.

EL ENCUENTRO (EN ESPAÑOL): Les invitamos a las 11:30 a.m. a reunirnos en la presencia del Señor, escuchar su Palabra y orar juntos. Favor de invitar a sus familiares y vecinos-- ¡Todos son bienvenidos! Nos reuniremos en **Fellowship Hall**. (gimnasio). ¡Nos vemos!

*[Translation] **EL ENCUENTRO (SPANISH GATHERING)** We invite you to join us at 11:30 a.m. to spend time in the presence of God through his Word, and to pray together. Feel free to invite your family and friends-- everyone is welcome! We meet in the **Fellowship Hall**. See you! English translation via headset is available.*

The Week Ahead

Sunday

8:45 a.m. Kamerkoor
11:30 p.m. Spanish Worship Gathering
7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Monday-Friday

Church Office Closed

Wednesday

6:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study
8:30 a.m. Wednesday Morning Prayers (zoom)

Congregational News

Please remember in prayer those in the hospital and in care facilities.

Please remember to have someone notify the church office when you are in the hospital so you can receive spiritual care by the pastoral staff. Call 392-1459.

Beginning in the new year, 10 students and 10 mentors will start the Profession of Faith process at TRC. This process is a time for questions, learning, and relationship building. Please keep these students and mentors in your prayers as they spend time in God's word and think about how their faith connects with their lives, actions, and relationship to Christ.

Anna Stewart - Kay Stewart
Lucy Green - Chris Walvoord
Faith Millen - Anna Bierd
Kimia McMullen - Susan Boes
Rilla Carpenter - Madison Pierce
Lucy Carpenter - Laura Baer
Jana Honeycutt - Jane Dalman
Remi VanFarowe - Megan Boes
Miriam Lopez-Koolhaas - Kathy Schoon-Tanis
Lorena Lopez-Koolhaas - Bethany Bulthuis

PRAYER SPOTLIGHT: Pray for Phyllis Brown, Carl Folkert, Marcia Callicoat, Orlow Family. Hospice-Margaret Doorenbos. Home-Bill Charlton, Barb Mummert; Out of Town-Lucille Schroeder, Ellen Rieck, LaVerne Lievense. Missionaries-Wayne & Miho Jansen (Japan), Rowland Jr. & Jane VanEs (Kenya), Victor Kanyi (Kenya).

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: This year we will have one evening service at 7:00 p.m. This service will feature children in a live nativity as the scriptures about the birth of our Savior are read aloud. We will enjoy a cookies and punch reception after the service. The offering from the Christmas Eve service will go to Resilience, which has experienced a 36% increase in calls to its emergency hot line and a possible 30% decrease in its federal

funding. This remarkable agency not only responds to victims of domestic violence with 24 hour crisis response, emergency and supportive housing, and follow up therapy, but focuses on prevention with a violence high risk program, and coaching healthy and respectful manhood in our local schools.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS: The week between Christmas and New Year's the church office will be closed. The staff will be working a flex schedule throughout the week, however, the door alarms will not be turned off. Please plan on waiting till the following week to come into the office. Of course, pastoral staff is always available by email or, in time of need, by calling the office at 616-392-1459

SAVE THE DATE: The Youth will be hosting a fundraiser on Friday, January 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dinner will be served, there will be a skill/gift auction, and a time to learn about the upcoming student trips.

YEAR-END GIVING: If you are planning to make year-end gifts to Third Reformed Church and want them credited to your giving record in 2023, checks need to be dated (and postmarked, if mailed) December 31 or earlier and received at the church prior to January 6. With staff working limited hours between December 22 and January 1, you may also place contributions in the offering plates or in the USPS drop box outside the main door during that time. If you are giving shares of stock, the stock should be received in the church's account by December 29 (last business day before year-end). Instructions for a donation of shares of stock are available in the church office. If you are giving a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA, remember your trustee will need time to process your request and mail the check by December 31 for your gift to count in 2023.

FLOWER CALENDAR: If you would like to provide flowers in honor or memory of someone for the Sunday worship services, please sign up on the flower chart in the church office or call the church office, 392-1459.

In last week's newsletter, it was reported that during the months of November and December, the church needs to receive \$260,000 in income over that critical two-month period to meet our financial goals. Through this past weekend (as of December 18) we have received \$251,467 toward that target. With two weeks remaining before month-end, it looks like we will achieve that objective and go into the new year in a healthy financial position to sustain ministry in the months ahead when revenues tend to fall short of our monthly expenditures.

Thanks to all of you for your generous support of the ministry of TRC throughout this past year and during this important revenue period for the church.

ADVENT PUZZLE: If you have not had a chance to pick up your ordered puzzle, Amy Lunn will be available in the church office until 11:30 for you to do so.

YOU'RE INVITED to an All-Church Brunch on Sunday, December 31 at 10:00 a.m. followed by a combined worship service at 11:30 a.m. Both events will take place in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign up to provide part of the New Year's Day Brunch by following the link in this week's edition of Third Church News or by calling the church office, 616-392-1459.

Thank you to all who contributed to the Giving Tree. It was a very generous collection that was donated to the Community Action House.