

COCU4C

23 December 2018

*The church is fitted with a hearing loop which covers the body of the church.
Hearing aid wearers are advised to switch their aid to T-setting*

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

ORGAN PRELUDE

The people stand for the entrance of the Bible

CALL TO WORSHIP

We look for an extraordinary sign of hope for our world
but God's sign is most ordinary of all:

A young woman is with child.

We look to power for strength in our world
but God points to the most vulnerable:

She gives birth.

We look far and wide for a key to God's mystery,
but God points us home.

She calls this child Immanuel: God-with-us!

Let us rejoice, and worship our God

in our ordinary, vulnerable lives: God-with-us! *(Susan A. Blain)*

HYMN

GREETING AND WELCOME **add pass the peace blurb**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

We hold our breath, anticipating new depths of understanding
of your presence with us, O God:

the overturning, upending, uplifting Emmanuel.

We have held our Advent vigil, preparing
new responses to the truth of your love for us:

love made manifest in your word made flesh,
this child of Mary who moves within her,

inspiring her song of justice and joy.
**Move within and among us here, O God,
inspiring our songs of justice and joy. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season.
As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Teach us the peace that comes from justice.
Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared.
Magnify your love within us.
**Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,
That we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

We confess that at times we have remained unmoved
by your presence in our lives, Loving God.
**You have put a song of justice in our hearts
and we have, at times, refused to sing.**
At times, we are the proud:
**too scattered in our own thoughts
to recognise the needs of others.**
At times, we are the powerful:
**too caught up with getting ourselves ahead
to give a thought to those left behind.**
At times, we are the rich,
**too worried about filling ourselves
to remember those who are empty.**
Forgive us, loving God, and restore our voices;
**make us to sing out your promises
with gladness and rejoicing...**
the world waits, listening for our song of hope. *A silence is kept*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE: Modern Magnificat

My soul sings in gratitude. I'm dancing in the mystery of God.
The light of the Holy One is within me
and I am blessed, so truly blessed.
This goes deeper than human thinking.
I am filled with awe at Love whose only condition is to be received.
The gift is not for the proud, for they have no room for it.
The strong and self-sufficient ones don't have this awareness.
But those who know their emptiness can rejoice in Love's fullness.
It's the Love that we are made for, the reason for our being.
It fills our inmost heart space and brings to birth in us, the Holy One.
(Source: John Shelby Spong's website "A New Christianity for A New World" 19 Dec 2007)
Thanks be to God!

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God be in our hearts and in our understanding as we listen now for your Word of peace, joy, hope and love. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Micah 5: 2-5a

In this is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Magnificat

Arvo Pärt b. 1935

SECOND READING Hebrews 10: 5-10

The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Please stand for the gospel

A reading from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord

GOSPEL READING Luke 1: 39-55

The gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

HYMN

SERMON

THE RESPONSE TO GOD IN WORD AND ACTION

HYMN

*During the singing of this hymn our offering will be received.
Remain standing for the dedication prayer.*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Again at this Christmas, O God, we commit ourselves to carry your vulnerable life into the world which you so love, and to join the song of joy which rings down the ages. As those who have been touched by your life we celebrate your coming. *(Dorothy McRae-McMahon)*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The season has been building up,
a crescendo of hope, anticipation and joy.

Now we are near to the heights of joy.

Soon we will proclaim, "Joy to the world!"

But the whole world is not ready for joy.

There are those places and lives in which joy is utterly absent,
barely remembered, almost given up.

For these places and people, we pray a gentle song of hope. *A silence is kept*

We pray to God, who lifts the lowly and fills the empty;

God who restores, restore joy to the despairing.

In this season that brings many together, we pray for those apart.

There are those who are alone, at a loss, lost.

For these people, children of God, we pray a gentle song of love. *A silence is kept*

God-with-Us, Emmanuel, be with the lonely.

We pray for ourselves and those we love, and our mixed emotions in this season of goodwill.

A silence is kept

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(printed inside cover of hymn book)*

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

HYMN

SENDING OUT

May your love overflow more and more
with knowledge and full insight
to help you determine what is best.
This is how we will clear the way for the
coming of peace and beauty:
by remembering the overflowing love of God
that spills constantly into our lives and the life of the world.
It is our faith in this love that will awaken the world to hope.

BENEDICTION

The tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high, break upon you,
to give you light and to guide your feet into the way of peace.
As we go from this place, let us be bearers of God's Spirit, participating in the work of salvation.
We bear in our lives the steadfast love of God and the compassion of Christ.
We carry the seeds of the Holy Spirit within us - seeds of peace, justice, compassion and love.
We are sent, blessed to be a blessing:
In the name of God the Ancient Promise,
In the name of Christ the Way of Love,
And in the name of the Spirit, Breath of Peace:
We go in peace to love and serve our world. Amen.

***You are invited to be seated for the playing of the postlude,
or to leave at this point without disturbing those who wish to listen.***

POSTLUDE

Please stand as the Bible is taken from the church

Presiding Minister Rev Sandy Boyce
Scripture Reader
Organist & Choir Director Peter Kelsall

The Choir of Pilgrim Church

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***Please join us for tea or coffee and fellowship in the Lounge
after the service.***