

**Grace Community Presbyterian Church
December 19, 2021**



A Celebration of Christmas Music

Fourth Sunday of Advent

12/19/21

Thought For Meditation:

Music touches us in ways that spoken words never can. Sometimes we are surprised by our reaction to a song we haven't heard in ages. Music sneaks behind our defenses. Our favorite hymns touch us in surprising and wonderful ways. Through songs God enters our hearts and speaks a word of love, peace, hope, or joy.

That is especially true at Christmas time. There is something about the old familiar carols that catches us unaware and touches our hearts. Songs can transport us back to our favorite places and memories. They bring us into the loving arms of God.

Let's join together to hear the story of God's love for us as we read the Christmas story and sing our favorite Christmas songs, celebrating the birth of Christ. He is Emmanuel, God with us, God for us, God in us.

Prelude

Offertory on French Carols

Guilmant

Welcome & Announcements

Doug Marshall

Advent Wreath Ceremony

Linda Johnson

***Hymn of Praise Angels We Have Heard on High**

#278

***Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving**

The Promise of a Savior

Matthew 1:18-21

Paul Milz

Prayer of Confession

Great and glorious God, we confess that the songs of Christmas touch our hearts, but we often refuse to change our lives. We know the story of Jesus' birth, life and death, but we resist the cost of following him. We proclaim that in Jesus the blessed age of grace has appeared and the hoped-for time of salvation has come, yet we cling to the safety and glory of the present age. We choose to walk in darkness, unwilling to see the evil that your light exposes.

Cleanse us, O God, and set us free. Break the yoke that we choose to carry. We pray this through your Son, Jesus Christ, who left behind his heavenly glory and gave himself for us, that we might be your people, holy and humble.

Silent Prayer of Confession...

Assurance of Forgiveness

Song of Forgiveness

Chancel Choir

At Christmas Time All Christians Sing

*** Passing of the Peace**

L: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us share the peace of Christ with each other.

* Hymn of Joy	Joy To the World/Unspeakable Joy	See Insert
The Birth of Jesus	Luke 2:1-7	Gary Barbiaux
Hymn of the Child	What Child Is This?	#281

Offering of our Tithes and Gifts

The Wisemen's Gifts	Matthew 2:1-2, 9-1 (pg835)	Katie Ludwig
Song of the King		Chancel Choir
	O Infant Sweet, O Infant Mild	

The Mind of Christ	Philippians 2:5-11	Jackie Chickarella
Song of Commitment	Christmas Sanctus	Chancel Choir

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

The Shepherds and the Angels	Luke 2:8-18
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* Hymn of the Angels	Angels, from the Realms of Glory (v1-2, 4) #259
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*** Charge and Benediction**

* Congregational Response	Emmanuel	#243
	Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel; God with us, revealed in us; His name is called Emmanuel.	

Postlude	Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella	Chapman
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***PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE**

Welcome to Grace Community Presbyterian Church this morning. They're back.... Please join us for Coffee Fellowship in Cana Hall after the service. Your hosts will be Dan and Teresa Howard.

Please Join Us for Christmas Eve Worship on Friday, December 24th at 8:00pm.

C.S. Lewis – Adult Sunday School Class

You may have seen the blockbuster movie, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. You may even have read the book or the whole Narnia series. But what do you know about C.S. Lewis, the man behind the book? What does "C.S." stand for? He was one of the most published authors of the 20th century, a professor of medieval literature at Oxford and Cambridge, a man who loved long walks, going to a pub to drink beer, smoke his pipe and tell jokes with friends. Join Pastor Doug as he leads a four week class (January 9, 16, 23, 30) on the life and writings of C.S. Lewis, whose faith and writings are still contemporary, encourage us in our own lives and challenge us to grow in our faith. Sundays @ 9:00 AM, in Cana Lounge.

Ding-a-Lings Thanks to the following who rang bells for the Salvation Army kettle drive: Arch and Bonnie Carroll, Terri Ludwig, Jen and Denny Beck, John Irvin, Cathy Vitari, Glenn Nordmark and Linda and Lee Johnson. Several of the ringers mentioned that people had been giving well (**\$823.00 was collected**) and that their ringing was an uplifting experience.

Mask Update: The session discussed the increasing number of COVID cases in western PA. There will be no drastic actions at this time (i.e. not cancelling worship), however we do want to encourage people to be careful and take precautions when needed. The one "change" we are making (which is noted on signs at the entrance doors) has to do with masks. The signs used to ask people to wear masks if they are not vaccinated. The signs now say: **If you are not vaccinated, or you have cold / flu symptoms, PLEASE WEAR A MASK. This will help keep others safe.**

If you have any questions about this, please feel free to give the Pastor a call or come by the office.

TODAY'S MUSIC: The Sussex Carol is a popular British carol, sometimes referred to by its first line "**On Christmas Night All Christians Sing.**" Its words were first published by Luke Wadding, a 17th-century Irish bishop, in a work called *Small Garland of Pious and Godly Songs* (1684). It is unclear whether Wadding wrote the song or simply included an existing song.

Both the text and the tune to which it is now sung were discovered and written down by Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams, who heard it being sung by Harriet Verrall of Monk's Gate, near Horsham, Sussex (hence "Sussex Carol"). The tune to which it is generally sung today is the one Vaughan Williams took down from Mrs. Verrall and published in 1919. Vaughan Williams' setting is found in his *Eight Traditional English Carols*. Several years earlier, Vaughan Williams had included the carol in his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, first performed at the 1912 Three Choirs Festival at Hereford Cathedral.

An earlier version using a different tune, and a variation on the first line, "On Christmas Night True Christians Sing," was published as early as 1878 in Henry Ramsden Bramley's and John Stainer's *Christmas Carols New and Old*.

Another of today's anthems, *Shines the Light*, focuses on two events of Jesus' life – the manger and the cross. Susan Naus Dengler's tender poem is set to music, beautifully crafted by her husband, Lee.

On the edge of a night lit with hope and promise, all the heavens are filled with the glory of God. From a rough wooden bed in a stable in Bethlehem shines the light of the world. Alleluia!

For the Child that is born here is sent from above to show us freedom and peace and love. From the life that He

lives as He walks among us shines the light for our pathways. Alleluia!

On the edge of a day dimmed with grief and sorrow, though the dark would consume that radiance so bright, from a rough, wooden cross on a hillside called Calvary shines the light that is Jesus. Alleluia!

For the man that hangs there is sent from above to bring us freedom and peace and love. From the life that denied the grave its power shines our light, our salvation. Alleluia!



Merry Christmas



This Week's Calendar

Dec. 21	Bible Study	1:00pm
Dec. 22	Choir	7:00pm
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Worship	8:00pm
Dec. 25	Merry Christmas	

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	Looking Ahead	
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve	

Grace Community Presbyterian Church
2751 Grant Street, Lower Burrell, PA 15068
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Website: www.gracecommunitypresbyterian.org
Worship Service is at 10:00am

Church Staff:

Pastor: Doug Marshall, Interim Pastor
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Secretary: Wendy Stein Clark
secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org
Christian Ed.: Bill Ludwig (interim)
Organist: Kenneth Mc Geary
Treasurer: Ray Zerjav
Custodian: John Baron and Paul Zunich

Elders

Cathy Brady*
Dave Briscoe*
Arch Carroll
Cathy Christoforetti
Michael Cochenour*
Martha Gumbert
David Highfield
Dan Howard
John Irvin*
Henry Kedzierski
Val Lester*
Lew McNay
Glenn Nordmark*
Stephanie Tutka*
Cathy Vitari**

Deacons

Darlene Artman
Rich Artman
Gary Barbiaux
Judy Barbiaux
Kitty Berkey
Margie Bistline
Beulah Brown
Jackie Chickerella*
Cindy Irvin
Linda Johnson
Terri Ludwig
Connie Markle
Judy Sulitz
Mary Ann Walter
Lou Walter

*Denotes Chairman
**Clerk of Session

*Denotes Moderator