

The Light of the World, the Light of Life

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 22, 2019

Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship



The New-born, Georges de la Tour, 1640s

Prelude

Ringling of the Singing Bowl

Lighting the Candle of Love

In the beginning was the WORD and in the Word lived LOVE. (*Light Candle*)

Advent expects love to win. Expectation grows like a child in the womb.

This growing love opens closed doors, sets prisoners free, heals those who are blind, and lame.

This growing love perseveres in the belief that through the tender mercy of our God, good will be born and will flourish, and will save the world.

We wait for the birth of Love:

Love for neighbour

Love for self

Love for creation

Love for God

In the beginning was the WORD

In the Word lives HOPE and PEACE and JOY and LOVE.



Call to Worship – Sing the Journey #121

Hymn #216 “Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”

Hymn #203 “Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light”

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmas-tide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

The Foretelling

Lesson 1: Isaiah 9:2,6-7

² The people that walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,
upon them hath the light shined.

⁶ For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given,
and the government shall be upon His shoulder;
and His name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God,
the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace
there will be no end,
for the throne of David and His kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
From this time forward, and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Meditation on the Foretelling

Hymn #189 – To Us a Child of Hope Is Born

The Annunciation

Lesson 2: Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Meditation on the Annunciation

Hymn #181 – My Soul Proclaims with Wonder

The Recognition

Lesson 3: Luke 1:39-45

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in

her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

Meditation on the Recognition

Hymn #182 – O How Shall I Receive Thee

Hymn #198 – Let Our Gladness Have No End

The Birth

Lesson 4: Luke 2:1-7

2 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Meditation on the Birth

“Night of Silence” (choir, led by Deberah Shears)

Lighting of the Christ Candle

In the beginning was the WORD, and in the Word was LIGHT and LIFE.
(*Light Candle*)

Advent has led us to the place where the WORD lives. It is here, in our midst.

The word became flesh and chose to dwell with us.

The word was seen and touched and held and heard.

The child of Christmas grew into all the glory of being human, fully human, full of grace and truth.

Our waiting is over.

We go forward walking into the work of Hope.

We commit to becoming the Peace we want to see in the world.

We witness to the possibility of Joy.

We persevere in Love.

In this way we grow into the grace and truth of becoming fully human.

In the beginning was the WORD

In the Word lives LIGHT and LIFE.

Hymn #191 – O Little Town of Bethlehem

Hymn #195 – It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

The Adoration

Lesson 5: Luke 2:8-20

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Meditation on the Adoration

#196 – While Shepherds Watched

#197 - Angels We Have Heard on High



Discussion Time

Sharing/Prayer

Hymn #318 - Joy to the World

Benediction

