

First Presbyterian Church of Youngstown

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

A Service of Lessons and Carols

December 22, 2024

11:00 a.m.

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Bolded words indicate unison responses from the congregation.

REFLECTION FOR WORSHIP

The following reflections on Isaiah 40:1-11 is provided for meditation as we prepare for worship.

On one hand, God will come with might and God's arm will rule; on the other hand, God will feed this flock like a shepherd. Both are pastoral words to a people whose long exile has found them questioning both God's power and God's love. - Cynthia A. Jarvis

Though everything else fails, God's word endures forever, and God come to lead them home - Kathleen M. O'Connor

God wills comfort and consolation to those in the very depths of despair and depends upon human as well as divine agency to bring that message from God's royal realm. - Richard F. Ward

Response: Are you more inclined to find your consolation from God or from other people?

Prayer: Let my hope be in your Word, which never fades. Amen.

WE GATHER

Prelude	<i>Sing Aloud On This Day</i> (German Carol)	arr. by Smith
	<i>Silent Night</i> (Traditional)	arr. by Holcomb
	<i>La Nanita Nana</i> (Spanish Carol)	arr. by Kelley
	<i>Greensleeves</i> Anonymous	arr. by Michel
	<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i> (Traditional)	arr. by Kelley

The Sheet and Tube Brass Quartet

Trumpets: Dalton Stoops and Tim Tuite

Trombones: Jonathan Willis and Matt Stemple

Welcome and Announcements

Sandy Benson

WE PREPARE

Threshold Moment

Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude

**Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude
and Peaceful Joy!**

Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives
**Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives
with peaceful joy!**

Let the sea laugh, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in it!

Focusing on Peaceful Joy

Let the waters clap their hands;
let the hills ring out with joy
before the Beloved, who radiates Peace to
all the earth.

For Love reigns over the world
with truth and justice
bringing order and balance to
all of Creation.

May heaven and nature sing
Joy to the World
**Heaven and nature sing out
with peaceful joy.**

Rev. Payne Warner

Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Motet Choir

Holy God, we await again the arrival of Your son, the Prince of Peace.
We long for the peaceful waters of joy that run deep and wide underneath all of life.
When we feel the chaos of life bearing down on us,
Help us to remember that it doesn't have to be this way.
Help us to step into a slower rhythm that is your Peaceful Joy.
Let truth and grace rule our hearts this day.
Let truth and grace rule our church this day.
Let truth and grace rule the world this day... in the name of Peace. Amen.

WE CONFESS

Call to Confession

The prophet Micah tells us that the "one of peace" will come from Bethlehem. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us confess our sins and set ourselves on Christ's path.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Soon we will celebrate the Prince of Peace, but we are not a people at peace. We glorify violence and dismiss the pacifist as weak. We dominate and demean turning dialogue into debate. We wage war with enemies and invest in self-defense before giving non-violent strategies a chance. Lord, forgive us. Help us work towards your peaceable kin-dom, where swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Amen

Assurance of Pardon

"And he will stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord ... And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace." In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

*Hymn of Forgiveness #583

Gloria, gloria

GLORIA (Taizé)

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

*Sharing the Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you! **May you have peaceful joy!**

WE LISTEN

Prayer of Illumination (in unison)

Open us, Holy One, to your Word and your Way. As we make our final preparations before Christmas, clear our minds of holiday distractions and long list of to-dos. Help us approach your Word with awe and wonder, so we may hear the message you intend for us today. Amen.

First Lesson

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

Alex Esseniya

Adam and Eve disobey God's command and disrupt the order and goodness of creation

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

Hymn #104

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

Second Lesson**Genesis 22:15-18**

Bob Thomas

God promises that, through Abraham, all the peoples of the world will be blessed

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

Anthem:***Et in Terra Pax***

John Purifoy

Third Lesson:**Isaiah 40:1-11**

Emily Slaven

God's People Are Comforted

¹ Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.
³ A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
⁵ Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."
⁶ A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass;

their constancy is like the flower of the field.
⁷ The grass withers; the flower fades,
[[when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
⁸ The grass withers; the flower fades,]]
but the word of our God will stand forever.
⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
¹⁰ See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him
and his recompense before him.
¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms
and carry them in his bosom
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Anthem:***A Carol Celebration***

Tom Fettke

*Rejoice, It is Christmastime O Thou Joyful, O Thou Wonderful Sing We Now of Christmas***Fourth Lesson:****Psalm 72:1-14**

Margie Patterson

The Messiah will come from the root of Jesse to restore the peace of creation

¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
² May he judge your people with righteousness
and your poor with justice.
³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.
⁵ May he live while the sun endures
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
⁷ In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
⁹ May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.
¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute;
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts.
¹¹ May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.
¹² For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
¹³ He has pity on the weak and the needy
and saves the lives of the needy.
¹⁴ From oppression and violence he redeems their life,
and precious is their blood in his sight.

Solo***Mary, Did You Know?***
Pam Root, soprano

Lloyd Larson

Fifth Lesson:**Luke 2:1-20**

Chuck Mansfield

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

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.

Anthem:*Christmas Is Coming*

Joel Raney

Sixth Lesson:**Luke 2:1-20**

Nina and Addison Hudock

*Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem where Mary gives birth to her child.
The Heavens announce the birth of the Savior.*

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar 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 in the guest room.

⁸ Now in that same 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.

Hymn #143*Angels From the Realms of Glory*

REGEBT SQUARE

Seventh Lesson:**Matthew 2:1-12***Wise men from the East arrive, following signs in the stars that a king has been born.*

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Anthem:*Carol of the Bells*

Peter Wilhousky

Eighth Lesson:**John 1:1-18**

Rev. Payne Warner

The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

WE DEDICATE**Call for the Offering****Offertory***Gèsu Bambino*

arr. by Larry Harris

The Sheet and Tube Brass

Prayer of Dedication

Holy God, with Mary we seek to magnify you in our worship and in our deeds. Accept these gifts and bless them for Christ's ministry. May they lift the lowly and fill the hungry. May they reveal your glory present with us today and still yet to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People and 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us;
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 #134*Joy to the World*

ANTIOCH

Benediction**Closing Anthem:***Hallelujah!*

G. F. Handel

The Motet Choir and Brass

**WE SCATTER TO CONTINUE OUR WORSHIP
IN SERVING OTHERS**

A warm welcome is extended to all who worship today.
May the gift of worship we offer honor God and serve as a blessing to you.

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WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. M. Payne Warner
Sandy Benson
Alex Esseniya

Bob Thomas
Emily Slaven
Margie Patterson

Chuck Mansfield
Nina and Addison Hudock
Brad Moisen

THE MUSIC TODAY

Prof. Larry Harris
The Sheet and Tube Brass Quartet

The Motet Choir

Pam Root, Soprano

THE VISUAL WORSHIP TODAY

Chris Soller

ALSO SERVING TODAY

Ushers: John Einfalt and Alex Esseniya

Facilities Staff: David Phibbs

WORSHIP NOTES

The liturgy for our Advent services was written by or adapted from liturgies written by Marcia McFee for Worship Design Studios, and by various people for the *Presbyterian Outlook*.

A Prayer for the Close of Advent

By Walter Brueggemann



In our secret yearnings
we wait for your coming,
and in our grinding despair
we doubt that you will.
And in this privileged place
we are surrounded by witnesses who yearn more than do we
and by those who despair more deeply than do we.
Look upon your church and its pastors
in this season of hope
which runs so quickly to fatigue
and in this season of yearning
which becomes so easily quarrelsome.
Give us the grace and the impatience
to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes,
to the edges of our fingertips.
We do not want our several worlds to end.
Come in your power
and come in your weakness
in any case
and make all things new.
Amen.



CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The perfect gift.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 22