



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

PEWEE VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – DECEMBER 22, 2019

10:30 A.M.

Bold text is read or sung by the congregation.

**Please stand if able.*

The origin of bells in Christian worship can be traced to the ram's horns and silver trumpets used in the Old Testament to announce the beginning of a feast. In churches that are fortunate enough to have them, bells are rung just before the liturgy to call the people together.

The Passing of the Peace is one of the most ancient responses in worship. Having received Christ's peace, we pass it on.

Seldom has the wonder of the Incarnation been expressed so beautifully as in the text of our prelude; created in the era when the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds were being codified and mindful of similar theological affirmations.

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

THE TRUE SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS: Advent 2019

This Advent we are celebrating the “true sounds” of Christmas that will never be found in the sounds of cash registers and the ringing of smart phones! The true sounds of Christmas are found in the lives we live with one another and with those we love. They are **HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE!**

You are encouraged as you gather in the sanctuary this year, *not* to sit down right away, but to go meet with others who are gathering. Share the true sounds of the season as we prepare to worship with one another! This morning: **LOVE**

The 12th Century theologian and philosopher, Peter Abelard, noted: “*The way that Jesus saves us is, he shows us how to LOVE.*” How does Jesus **LOVE**? How do you **LOVE**? What is the difference? When there is no difference then we are, according to Abelard, “saved.” Do you experience salvation in your life? If not, consider how you might **LOVE** more as Jesus **LOVED**.

THE RINGING OF THE BELL

***WELCOME AND THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

PREPARING OUR HEARTS

PRELUDE “Of the Father's Love Begotten”

D. CHERWIEN

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Barbara and Ed Staats

Today we continue the season of Advent by lighting the fourth of five candles in our Advent wreath. Each candle this year will represent **A TRUE SOUND OF CHRISTMAS: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love**

Each part of the Advent wreath symbolizes our spiritual preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. The circular shape of the Advent wreath symbolizes eternal life; the purple candles symbolize our repentance and waiting; the pink Advent candle symbolizes our joy that Christmas is coming. The white "Christ" candle, lit on Christmas Eve, symbolizes the coming of Jesus as "The Light of the World."

This hymn, a familiar carol, was first published as a poem in the Christmas Eve 1816 issue of a newspaper the author edited in Sheffield, England. The tune name celebrates the location of a prominent Presbyterian Church in London, sometimes called the "Presbyterian cathedral."

In the presence of a Holy God, we become aware of the ways we fall short of God's best hopes for us, and the ways we have hurt others. We turn to God in prayer, asking for forgiveness.

We express gratitude that through God's grace and Christ's giving of himself on the cross, we are forgiven and restored to God and one another.

We sing in thanksgiving for the gifts of forgiveness and new life.

We invite children to come to the front at this time.

*Guest Vocalists:
Anna Brown Long - Soprano
Kennedy Gill - Soprano
Sacha Powers - Alto*

As Christians, we experience God as "Love." God gives us "Love" in the very act of living. God speaks to us of "Love" in the person of Jesus. God offers us "Love" every day we live into God's will and Christ's Way. As we light our fourth candle let us consider how we, too, are God's "Love" in the world.

Dear God of Love, give us this day the courage to find your sacrificial Love in our own life. Give us the courage to, like Jesus before us, claim our identity as Love Incarnate. May we, too, be a true sound of Christmas – Love for all who live. May it be so. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN NO. 22

"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"

REGENT SQUARE

CALL TO CONFESSION

Toby Fletcher

Now is the time to wake from sleep.

Salvation is near. Let us confess our sins:

Come, Christ Jesus, be our guest, and may our lives by you be blest. Come God-with-us, and free us from the false claims of the empires of this world. We are lonely for you and your peace. Come, Emmanuel, and dwell with us, make us your people indeed, the people through whom you bring love and justice to the world. Come, Christ, and reign; claim your rightful place in our hearts and in the midst of our community. Plant the seeds of hope within us that we, too, may establish the Kingdom of God among us. Hear our silent prayers of return ...

(a time of silence for personal confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Every valley is lifted up; every mountain, made low.

Now the glory of the Lord is revealed, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE, HYMN NO. 2 (First Stanza)

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

TIME WITH THE YOUNGER DISCIPLES

Connie Vice

MUSICAL OFFERING

The Chancel Choir

"Hail Blessed Morn"

HENRY HORTON

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

THE SOUND OF LOVE

Ashia Stoess

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*PROCLAMATION HYMN NO. 12

"People, Look East"

BESANÇON

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

In a broken and fearful world, God's Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God and empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and faithful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and earth, saying: "Come Lord Jesus!"

TIME OF GIVING THANKS

CELEBRATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 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.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS, TITHES, AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY "Ding Dong Merrily on High"

A. UNSWORTH

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise Him, all creatures here below:
 Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
 Amen.

This hymn was written to provide a new Advent text for an existing carol tune, here named for the city in eastern France where it originated. The author has imaginatively expressed the cosmic effects of Christ's coming by addressing each stanza to a part of creation.

In 1983 the two largest Presbyterian churches in the United States reunited. The "Brief Statement of Faith" was commissioned and accepted for inclusion in the in the "Book of Confessions." It celebrates the rediscovery that for all our diversity, we are bound together by a common faith and a common task.

We bring to God our joys and concerns, praying for the world, the church and those close to us

This French carol, our offertory, was written in 1588 by Jehan Tabourot. Some 300 years later, English text was added by George Woodward. "Ding dong! Merrily on high, in heav'n the bells are ringing!"

"Doxology" literally means "words of glory" and have long been used by Jews and Christians to praise God. Here we honor and thank God "from whom all blessings flow."

This hymn, originally in Latin, takes us back over 1,200 years to monastic life in the 8th or 9th century. Seven days before Christmas Eve, monasteries would sing “O antiphons” in anticipation of Christmas.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

We give you thanks and praise, O God, that you have built us up in faith and bound us together in love. By your grace, may all that we do show the glory of your name and serve the good of your people, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN NO. 9**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

VENI EMMANUEL

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Violet Sears

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

“Hallelujah Chorus”

G.F. HANDEL

THE RINGING OF THE BELL

POSTLUDE

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!”

M. CORL

The story of this hymn (today’s postlude) has always been about accessibility to the Christmas story. In the late medieval period, there was a tradition of using folk songs to teach illiterate churchgoers the Gospel story; this is a good example of that practice. Written in a combination of Latin and German, it would be familiar in both the vernacular and the language of the Church. When set to a familiar folk tune, the people would be able to sing along with ease and understand the story.

PLEASE NOTE: Food and drinks are not allowed in the Sanctuary