

*Song of Response: "Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace" LUYH 97

God Sends; We Go Rejoicing

Prayers for the Church and World

*We Profess Our Faith: "The Nicene Creed" LUYH 806

*Benediction

*Closing Song: "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" LUYH 93

First Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 2023



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We root ourselves
in ritual*

Luke 2:27-32

Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

How does a weary world rejoice? During this season of Christmastide, we acknowledge the weariness, grief, rage, and hopelessness we carry—and we also affirm that we are made for joy.

† From the artist statement on the cover art: "Two people—one radiating joy and the other wading into weariness—hold the world together."

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Worship Participants

Pastor: Dr. David Westfall ♦ Piano: Jill Friend ♦ Viola: Derek Friend ♦ Worship Leader: Rebecca DeVries
Sound: Nick Breems ♦ Video: Terry Friend ♦ CCLI #493458 ♦ OneLicense #A-721171

Hearing Assistance

A telecoil hearing-loop system sends a signal into the sanctuary. If your hearing aid is t-coil equipped, try switching to the t-coil receiver. An FM hearing assistance system is also available for ears without hearing aids. Consult the sound operator for assistance.



We Gather; God Welcomes

Prelude: “Appalachian Christmas Carols” Vincent Persichetti

Welcome

Call to Worship: “Muscle Memory” Rev. Sarah Speed

*Song: “O Come, All Ye Faithful” LUYH 76:1,2

*God Greet Us, We Greet One Another

*Song: “Joy Has Dawned”

**1. Joy has dawned upon the world, promised from creation:
God's salvation now unfurled, hope for ev'ry nation.
Not with fanfares from above, not with scenes of glory,
but a humble gift of love: Jesus born of Mary.**

**2. Sounds of wonder fill the sky with the songs of angels,
as the mighty Prince of Life shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in darkness,
cling now to a mother's breast, vuln'erable and helpless.**

**3. Shepherds bow before the Lamb, gazing at the glory;
gifts of men from distant lands prophesy the story.
Gold—a King is born today, incense—God is with us,
myrrh—His death will make a way, by His blood He'll win us.**

**4. Son of Adam, Son of heav'n, given as a ransom,
reconciling God and man, Christ, our mighty champion!
What a Savior! What a Friend! What a glorious mystery!
Once a babe in Bethlehem, now the Lord of history.**

Text & Music: Keith Getty, Stuart Townend © 2004 Thankyou Music

*Song: “God Reigns, Earth Rejoices” LUYH 91:1,3,4

We Seek Jesus; God Forgives

Prayer of Confession

O God, we need Christ to renew our commitment.
We confess that our lack of faith has made us fearful.
May your angels sing again to us of peace.

We acknowledge that we have foolishly let our desires lead us astray.

May your star once more set our course firmly in your direction.

We have turned our faith unto a lifeless ritual.

May your manger call us again to expressions of love and devotion.

We have carefully kept our gifts

and have not freely given our goods and our hearts to you.

May the Magi show us the spirit of giving.

Lord, may your Spirit fill our hearts

and bring renewal in our lives. Amen.

Words of Assurance

No matter where you are on your journey of life, love, or faith,

and no matter what you have done or left undone, you belong to God.

You are claimed. You are known. You are forgiven.

This is the good news of the gospel!

Thanks be to God! Amen!

Song of Thanksgiving: “He Came Down”

He came down that we may have hope*, (repeat 3x)

Hallelujah forevermore.

***peace, joy, love**

Text & Music: Cameroon traditional; tr. and arr. by John Bell, © 1990 WGRG the Iona Community (Scotland), admin. GIA Publications, Inc.

Invitation to Giving

Offering our gifts is an important part of our response to God—connecting our worship with a life of discipleship—and is a way to participate in the ministry of Covenant CRC here in this building and around the world. Offering boxes are located at the entrances to the sanctuary, or check your bulletin announcements for more ways to give.

God Speaks; We Listen

Children's Blessing: “Christ, Be Our Light” LUYH 908 (refrain)

Children ages 3 years old through kindergarten are invited to go downstairs to the Multi-Purpose Room for a time of worship designed especially for young children. Our young guests are welcome to participate in this service.

Prayer of Blessing and Illumination

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:22-39

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Message: “My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation”

Dr. David Westfall