



IN JOINT FELLOWSHIP

*Sustaining a vibrant and growing congregation through Christian spiritual transformation,
making our work and the church relevant and visible.*

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Angels Among Us: #DoNotBeAfraid



“#morepeace”

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December 5, 2021
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Celebration of Divine Worship

WELCOME

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

INTROIT

Christmas Tidings

arr. Jim Meredith

("Mary Had a Baby, Go Tell It on the Mountain")

Sonos Handbell Ensemble

OPENING PRAYER and SUNG RESPONSE *[responsive]* David Betts & Fran Cooper

There are angels among us that may not meet the eye

There are messages of peace coming from a choir on high

But don't just look up:

for the way God works

is to plant more peace right here on earth

just like it was with Jesus' birth.

There are angels among us,

there are angels among us,

bringing peace on earth.

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,

alight within us your flames of peace this day.

Grant us openness to hear your message.

Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,

creating more peace in the midst of fear.

(WDS; *Angels Among Us: Do Not Be Afraid*)

Sung Response

He Came Down

TFWS 2085 (adapt.)

*He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace,
Hallelujah forevermore.*

A SONG, SCRIPTURE AND A PRAYER

Opening Song

To a Maid Engaged to Joseph

UMH 215

1. *To a maid engaged to Joseph, the angel Gabriel came.
"Fear not", the angel told her, "I come to bring good news,
Good news I come to tell you, good news, I say, good news.*
2. *For you are highly favored by the God the Lord of all,
Who even now is with you. You are on earth most blest,
You are most blest, most blessed, God chose you, you are blest!"*
3. *But Mary was most troubled to hear the angel's word.
What was the angel saying? It troubled her to hear,
To hear the angel's message, it troubled her to hear.*

4. *"Fear not, for God is with you, and you shall bear a child. His name shall be called Jesus, God's offspring from on high. And he shall reign forever, forever reign on high."*

5. *"How shall this be?" said Mary, "I am not yet a wife." The angel answered quickly, "The power of the Most High Will come upon you shortly, your child will be God's child."*

6. *As Mary heard the angel, she wondered at his words. "Behold, I am your handmaid," she said unto her God. "So be it; I am ready according to your word."*

Scripture

Luke 1:26-38a (CEB)

David Betts

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God."

Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said."

Scriptural Response

Mary Had a Baby

Spiritual, arr. Jacqueline Hairston

Christabel Nunoo, Soprano

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

*Please feel free to use the name of your choice for God that speaks to your soul.

Our *Creator in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer of Confession and Resolve /responsive/

David Betts & Fran Cooper

Our hearts are hard, O God -

Softening them with your love.

Our hands are clenched, O God -
Open them with your grace.

Our feet are planted too firmly, O God -
Invite us to dance with you.

Our lives are not our own, we know -
Let us live and move and have our being in you, O God.

[breath of silence]

Holy God, we can be so full of fear at times - afraid of the unknown; afraid of what is beyond our control; afraid of what is strange to us. And we know that fear stops us in our tracks, hinders our action, and gives excuses for not doing what you call us to do and what you empower us to do. So we pray that you will give us courage, O God. Give us strong hearts and open hands, that we might set aside our fear, and walk confidently into this world you have made. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Beth Merrill Neel

TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND HOPE

Assurance of Grace

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

When our hearts are softened, our hands opened, and our feet begin to dance, we know your redemption; we know your peace.

We are forgiven through Jesus the Christ. Amen.

PASSING THE PEACE

*As forgiven people Living in the season of waiting,
let us share peace with our siblings in the world!*

SHARING IN COMMUNION OF THE BREAD AND CUP

MESSAGE

“Angels Among Us: #morepeace”

Rev. Pamela L. Kurtz, *Pastor*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Surely the Presence of the Lord UMH 328

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.
I can feel the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.*

LIVING AS THE CHURCH, GRATITUDES, OFFERINGS

Living as the Church

Gratitude Times

Offering Time

Offering Words

THANKSGIVING SONG

God is Good, All the Time

W&S 3026

5. *God is good, God is good all the time.
God is good, God is good all the time.
As our thanks and our praise now we raise,
God is good, God is good all the time.*

CLOSING SONG The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy TFWS 2098

1. *The Virgin Mary had a baby boy, the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy, and they say that his name is Jesus.
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer! Oh yes, believer!
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.*
2. *The angels sang when the baby born, the angels sang when the baby born,
The angels sang when the baby born, and they say that his name is Jesus.
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer! Oh yes, believer!
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.*
3. *The shepherds came where the baby born,
the shepherds came where the baby born,
The shepherds came where the baby born, and they say that his name is Jesus.
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer! Oh yes, believer!
He come from the glory, he come from the glorious kingdom.*

CLOSING PRAYER (responsive)

David Betts & Fran Cooper

Child of Promise; come into our hearts and lives this Christmas season. Reshape our imagination to expect your coming in new ways, in the small, the simple, and the vulnerable.

In this new Advent season, as the pace gathers momentum, remind us again that your gift of love can never be earned, but only received, given by your gracious hand.

Help us become like your servant, Mary, innocent and wide eyed, full of anxiety and uncertainty, expectation and wonder, courageous and faithful enough to let you come into the most intimate parts of our lives, to remake us in your divine image, from the inside out.

God, grant us grace to live well the journey to Bethlehem and welcome, as for the first time, the Word made flesh, God coming to us in the tender freshness of a new born child. Amen.

Roly Scott

POSTLUDE

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

arr. Mark Hayes

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