The Worship of God

A Service of Lament and Loss

20 December 2017
Advent IV

Myers Park Baptist Church
Charlotte, North Carolina
The Worship of God
A Service of Lament and Loss; Advent IV
20 December 2017 at Half past six o’clock in the evening

The Community Gathers Before God

This service of Lament and Loss is a time when we name those losses that have changed our lives and the people who are no longer with us. We gather together during the Christmas season as a reminder of the joy that is born among us despite our sadness and the light that shines in the midst of our darkness.

Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus, we welcome and affirm all of God’s people into the life of the Church regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical limitation, educational background, or economic situation.

Gluten-free wafers are available in the Narthex.

The Prelude
“Exultate Jubilate: Alleluia”
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Erinn Frechette, flute

The Call to Worship
Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

Following worship, all are invited to join us for coffee and cookies in Heaton Hall Foyer; and if you have not yet done so, please silence your cell phone.

*The Opening Hymn
“It came upon the midnight clear”
Stanzas 1, 3 and 4
See page 5.

Carol

The Meditation on Hope
Leader: We light the first candle of Advent,
People: to signal our watch for the coming of Christ,
All: who will expel the spirit of discontent and bring healing for the nations.

(Lighting the Candle of Hope)

Holy Darkness (Sung 2 times.)

Erinn Frechette, flute

*Please stand in body or in spirit.
The Meditation on Peace

Leader: We light the second candle of Advent,
People: to signal our hope for the renewal of creation,
All: which will reveal the image of God and restore harmony with nature.

(Lighting the Candle of Peace)
Holy Darkness (Sung 2 times.)

The Meditation on Joy

Leader: We light the third candle of Advent,
People: to signal our faith in the triumph of justice,
All: which will expose the folly of pride and magnify purity of heart.

(Lighting the Candle of Joy)
Holy Darkness (Sung 2 times.)

The Meditation on Love

Leader: Today we light the last candle of Advent,
People: to signal our trust in the promise of God,
All: who will establish the reign of love on earth
and uphold it with righteousness for evermore.

(Lighting the Candle of Love)
Holy Darkness (Sung 2 times.)

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

All are welcome at this Table. It is open to all who seek to follow Jesus. There are no requirements of creed, denominational affiliation or age. Come, bring all the faith you have to this table of grace.

Gluten-free wafers are available in the Narthex.

The Invitation to the Table

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord’s Prayer
Our God, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass 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.

The Words of Institution

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

The Music at Communion
“Messiah: He Shall Feed His Flock” George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

The Prayer After Communion (unison)
We thank you, O God, for the table of grace
which brings all people of earth
before your presence.
May we who have been guests at this table
grow in love for one another,
that through us your light may shine in all the world. Amen.
The Meditation on Christ
The Reverend Joseph D. Aldrich

(Lighting the Christ Candle)

The Lighting of Candles of Lament and Loss
The Reverend Carrie Veal

*During the lighting of the candles of remembrance, you are invited to come forward and name those losses that have changed your life.*

*The Closing Hymn
“In the bleak midwinter”

(Cranham

(Stanzas 1, 2 and 4)

The Benediction

The Postlude

“In Elijah: If With All Your Hearts”

(Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Following worship, you are invited to join us for coffee and cookies in Heaton Hall foyer.

Leading worship this evening with The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister, are The Reverend Joseph D. Aldrich, Associate Minister, The Reverend Carrie Veal, Minister of Children and Community Life, The Reverend Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Associate Minister, and Nancy Gribble, Member of the Congregation.

Worship through music is provided by Frances L. Morrison, Minister of Music, John Richardson, Organist, and Erinn Frechette, Flutist.

The sound technician is Eric Roberts.

The cover art is a watercolor by Rev. Cheryl Collins Patterson © 2009, used by permission.
It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849; alt.
Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

1. It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
   From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold:
   “Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heaven’s all-gracious King”:
   The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come, With peaceful wings unfurled,
   And still their heavily music floats O’er all the weary world:
   Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hovering wing.
   And ever o’er its Babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

3. And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, Whose forms are bending low,
   Who toil along the climbing way With painful steps and slow,
   Look now! for glad and golden hours Come swiftly on the wing.
   O rest beside the weary road, And hear the angels sing.

4. For lo, the days are hastening on, By prophet bards foretold,
   When with the ever-circling years Comes round the age of gold;
   When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
   And the whole world give back the song Which now the angels sing.
In the Bleak Midwinter

1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
   Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
   Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
   In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
   Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;
   But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
   The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
   Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
   If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
   Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

4. What can I give him, poor as I am?
   If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
   Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
   Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer’s birthplace in Cheltenham.
The Season of Advent 2017

Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

Family Worship with Communion
11:00a in the Sanctuary

The Music of Christmas with Flute, Violin, and Organ
5:30p in the Sanctuary

Candlelight Worship with Communion
6:00p in the Sanctuary

Nativity Tableau with Communion
7:30-8:30p "drop in" in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 31

Jazz Worship in the Round
11:00a in Heaton Hall

Sunday, January 7, 2018

Epiphany Sunday Worship with Communion
11:00a in the Sanctuary
Our Covenant

We, the members of the Myers Park Baptist Church, are a people on a journey of faith. By God’s grace we are experiencing God’s love through Jesus Christ and in the community of the faithful. We are discovering in this experience our freedom to become new creatures and our responsibility to be faithful stewards of our lives and of this world.

We will be open to all new light, strengthened by God and each other in our faith. We will sustain a critical examination of Scripture, belief and ritual as interpreters of God’s active presence in the world. We will accept controversy as a reality of life together and an opportunity for growth toward maturity. We covenant to be a community of God’s new creation and affirm that we are open to all and closed to none.

We covenant to nurture this Church as a community of faith and as an instrument for reconciliation in this world: by worship, by Christian education, by the dedication of our personal and material resources and by all the other ways we express the significance of our lives with God and one another.

We covenant together to be priests celebrating God’s presence in community and in the world, believing we are participants in God’s kingdom on earth.

Myers Park Baptist Church
Open to All
1900 Queens Road
Charlotte, NC 28207-2582

704.334.7232
WWW.MYERSPARKBAPTIST.ORG

Ministers
As priests to one another, all members of the congregation are ministers. Some are called out for particular places of service:

The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister
Frances L. Morrison, Minister of Music
The Reverend Joseph D. Aldrich, Associate Minister
The Reverend Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Associate Minister
The Reverend Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator
The Reverend Carrie Veal, Minister of Children and Community Life
John Richardson, Organist
Charlotte Judge, Associate Director of Music
Allen Davis, Director of Youth Ministry
Jenny Yopp, Director of the Cornwell Center
Belinda Geuss, Director of Through-The-Week School

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