

December 17, 2023 Third Sunday of Hdvent Lessons and Carols The Astonishing Stable

Prelude

All Is Well

ar.. Richard Kingsmore

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. Bradley D. Smith

Lighting of the Advent Candle/Call to Worship

Thomas, Carolyn, Tommy, Will, and Sutton Stoddard (9:00 am) Niles, Elizabeth, Adelaide, and Ned Helmboldt; Jim, Lanie, James, Eliza, and Mac Kitchens (11:15 am)

Leader: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."
People: The world says, "Worry," and we say, "Rejoice."
Leader: The news says, "Fear," and we say, "Rejoice."
People: The world says, "Be happy," and the church says, "Be faithful."
Leader: As we light our third Advent candle, we pray for hope, peace, and joy.
All: Come now, O child of Mary. Come now, O Prince of Joy.

*Carol of Adoration #133 (Children exit for Children's Church)

O Come, All Ye Faithful

- O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem! Come, and behold him, born the King of angels! Refrain: O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!
- 3. Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest! *(to refrain)*
- 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! (to refrain)

*Prayer of Adoration

Rev. Dr. Douglass D. Key

arr. David Willcocks

(Congregation, please remain seated during the reading of the Lessons.)

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2a, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rest upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Carol #137 (congregation and choir)

He Came Down

- 1. He came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.
- 2. He came down that we may have light; hallelujah forevermore.
- 3. He came down that we may have peace; hallelujah forevermore.
- 4. He came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forevermore.

Second Lesson: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinuis was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and the family of David. He went to registered with Mary, to whom, he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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 for them in the inn.

Carol

Let the Stable Still Astonish

Let the stable sill astonish; straw-dirt floor, dull eyes, dusty flanks of donkeys, oxen; crumbling crooked walls; No bed to carry that pain, and then, the Child, rag-wrapped, laid to cry in a trough. Who would have chosen this? Who would have said: "Yes, let the God of all the heavens and earth be born here, in this place."? Who, but the same God who stands, the darker, fouler rooms of our hearts and says, "Yes, let the God of all the heavens and earth be born here, in this place." Let the stable still astonish in this place, be born here, in this place.

Yasmin Bradshaw, soprano

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Dr. J Ben Sloan

Dan Forrest

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.

Third Lesson: Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord, This will be a sign for you: You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising god and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

- 1. Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing o'er the plains, And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis deo!
- 2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song? Gloria in excelsis deo!
- 3. Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing; Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the new-born King. Gloria in excelsis deo!
- 4. See Him in a manger laid Jesus, Lord o heav'n and earth; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, With us sing our Savior's birth. Gloria in excelsis deo!

Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:15-16

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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Carol #121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
- 2. For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above, while mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.
- 3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.
- 4. O holy child of Bethlehem, descent to us we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell: O come to us; abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

Scripture Focus John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sermon

"Not Me. Not You. Not Us. Him. All Him."

Offertory

I Wonder As I Wander

Laura Hutchins, soprano, Nico Caruso, tenor

Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Dr. Bradley D. Smith

arr. Fedor Vrtacnik

Jason Burbage

arr. John Rutter

arr. Howard Helvey

Fifth Lesson: Luke 4: 14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and reports about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendance and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Carol (choir)

The Work of Christmas

Dan Forrest When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the pris'ner, To rebuild the nations; To bring peace among brothers, To make music from the heart. When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock, the work of Christmas begins.

Howard Thurman

MENDELSSOHN

*Affirmation of Faith—from Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible. All things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen

*Carol of Dedication #119 (congregation)

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

- 1. Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King; Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled: Joyful all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies, With th'angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem. Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King.
- 2. Christ by highest heav'n adored, Christ the everlasting Lord, Late in time behold him come Offspring of a virgin's womb: Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th'incarnate Deity! Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King.
- Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, 3. Risen with healing in his wings; Mild he lays his glory by, Born that man no more may die, Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King.

Benediction

Postlude

Rise Up, Go Tell It!

arr. Lloyd Larson

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL MUSICIANS WHO PARTICIPATED THIS MORNING, ESPECIALLY ORCHESTRA MEMBERS Korcan Köstük, Julia Jacobsen, Bri Harris, Margie Moore, Bill Slechta, Mia Bailey, Eunice Koh, Heidi Carey, Jonathan Evans, Annie Eaton, Katie Eaton, Aaron Nealy, Melanie Ingram, Kenneth Green, Hunter Poe, Nick Dewyer, Greg Apple, Ian Mahaffey, and Olivia Colomaio



In honor of Liz Agee--angels walk among us - Sam

Given in loving memory of Marilyn Stradtman for all her devotion to the Washington Street UMC Soup Cellar, with love from all her helpers

In loving memory of Gail Gerrard Williams - Joe and Carol Anderson

In loving memory of Furman and Evelyn Gerrard - Joe and Carol Anderson

In loving memory of Joe and Clarissa Anderson - Joe and Carol Anderson

In honor of our grandchildren, Clarke, Foster, Evelyn, Ivy, Yates and Wren - Joe and Carol Anderson

In loving memory of Fran DiBiase and Mac Atkins, Jr. Given with love by Mac, Carmen, Tilden and Carter Atkins.

In memory of Rhett Shuler Barker by her family.

In memory of Shellie Kearse Barker by her family.

In loving memory of Roy, Sarah and Steve Bates - Brian and Ginger Bates

In loving memory of Florence Fowler and in honor of Lewis W. Fowler, Jr. - Brian and Ginger Bates

To the glory of God and in honor of Peggy M. Batten - Robert

To the glory of God and in honor of Henry T. Price

To the glory of God and in honor of Richard Reinhardt.

In loving memory of Buddy and Mary Padgett, Lynn's parents

In honor of Jim and Eleanor Beard, Neal's parents

In honor of Grace and Jordan Epler, Katherine and Thomas Hartmann, and Mary Martha Beard

In honor of our Eastminster pastors and support staff - Neal and Lynn Beard

In celebration of the Ted Haigler, Jr. Sunday School class - Neal

In loving memory of Emilie and Keith Benson, and Paul Benson, given by Phyllis and George Beighley, George Beighley, Jr., and Kathryn Beighley Dinkins

In loving memory of Jack and Martha Beighley, given by Phyllis and George Beighley, George Beighley, Jr., and Kathryn Beighley Dinkins

In memory of Sandra Bethea - Bob and Leslie Bethea

In memory of Scott Caldwell - Bob and Leslie Bethea

In memory of James Sherard - Bob and Leslie Bethea

In memory of Valerie Sturgeon - Bob and Leslie Bethea

In memory of our parents who always instilled in us the true meaning of Christmas, Shellie and Jim Walters and Kathryn and

Harry Bryant. Sharon and Steve Bryant

In honor of Lyndey and Peyton Bryant, and our granddaughters Ellery and Addy. May your Christmas be filled with the love and joy of Christ. Sharon and Steve Bryant

In honor of Paige and Cordes Kennedy. May your first Christmas as husband and wife be filled with the promise of love and joy from Christ. Sharon and Steve Bryant

To the glory of God

In memory of Oliver Counts by Mary and children Warrant, Cary and Robin

Give with love for our grandchildren - Baker, Reese, Chase, Campbell and Hank by Margaret and Buddy Cullum

In loving memory of Meg Dillard given by Jim Dillard

In loving memory of Meg Dillard by her family. Alex, Sarah & Hank Dillard; Coke, Anne, Mary Margaret & Virginia Mann; Jim, Mary Kate, Jack & Riley Powell.

In loving memory of Carl Salisbury Jr in loving memory by his family. Alex, Sarah & Hank Dillard

In loving memory of our mother and father and grandparents, Augusta and King Dixon, from Gus, Kim, Drew and Robert Dixon.

In loving memory of our mother and father and grandparents, Annette and Jake King, from Gus, Kim, Drew and Robert Dixon.

In loving memory of Ina Brooks Durham, beloved wife, mother, Grandmama/Nannie, and friend to so many

In loving memory of Lulie E. Felder - Betsy and Wilson McDonald

In loving memory of Jane's parents, Frank & Dorothy McFaddin, given by Bill and Jane Francis

In loving memory of Bill's parents, Marion & Jane Francis, given by Bill and Jane Francis

In loving memory of Jane's siblings, Frank McFaddin, Jr., Jack McFaddin, Lorraine M. Walker and Henry McFaddin, given by Bill and Jane Francis

In honor of our wonderful wife and mother, Rebekah Gaston. We love you dearly- Audrey, Emma Kate, and Caleb

To the glory of God and in honor of Robin Langston Gorman, my best friend - Mike

In honor of the entire staff at Eastminster - Mike and Robin Gorman

To the glory of God and in loving memory of Phyllis and Joe Williams by their family

To the glory of God and in loving memory of Dot and Bill Halligan by their family

In honor of Beth Oliver for opening her home for the EPW Holiday Social - from the EPW Coordinating Council

Grateful for Carol, it is a joy to walk through life with you.—Robert

In memory of Robert R. Hill, Sr.-Robert Hill

In memory of Nancy G. Clamp-Robert Hill

In honor of the new life of Hudson Hill.—Robert Hill

Dedicated to the memory of Ross Holcombe by his family

To the glory of God and in thanksgiving for the life of Hart Hubbard - the William Hubbard family In memory of William Matthews Hudson - John, Julie, Jack and Henry Hudson In loving memory of John Sim by the Livingston family In loving memory of Rankin Craig by the Livingston family In loving memory of Johnnie Livingston by the Livingston family In loving memory of Betsy Sommerkamp by Paula, Brian, and Alex Magargle In loving memory of Judy Love, by Paula, Brian, and Alex Magargle In loving memory of Marguerite Manning Rasor, mother to Coke Mann and grandmother to Mary Margaret and Virginia Mann From John McArthur in honor of Barbara McArthur From Barbara and John McArthur in memory of Branch and Anne Howe From Barbara and John McArthur in memory of Currie and Anne McArthur In gratitude and memory for the life and witness of Dr. William L. McDow In honor of Blair McDow on our thirtieth wedding anniversary In loving memory of Ginny, Helen, and Claude McMillan given by their family In loving memory of Nancy, Josephine, and Gus Postal given by their family In honor of Boo Griffin, our wonderful teacher, from your Small Group In memory of our parents, Reece and Josephine McWilliams, and Phil and Legare Bates from Bill and Sally McWilliams In gratitude and joy for the blessings of family - Reece, Lauren, Mac, Walker, James, Phillips, Christy, Phillips Jr., Reagan, Andrew, Leslie, and Molly from Mimi and Doc In loving memory of Dale and Larry Pedrick by Susi and Robert McWilliams. In loving memory of Reece and Josephine McWilliams by Susi and Robert McWilliams. In honor of Kathy Marsha by Susi and Robert McWilliams. In Memory of Marvin G. Carmichael and honor of Felicia Carmichael - With Love from Marion, Ashlee, Claire, and Marion Moses. In Honor of Frank and Margaret Moses - With Love and Gratitude - Marion, Ashlee, Claire, and Marion Moses; and, Guy, Elizabeth (Moses), Frances, and Guy Johnson. In honor of Jackie Stallings In loving memory of our precious grandson William "Beau" Snell. In memory of Fred Lewis and Juanita Price In memory of Gene and Clara Richardson In honor of my wonderful wife Phyllis, on our 48th wedding anniversary, from Fred, Trey and Megan Price, Will and Lauren Gillespie, Miss Addison Grace Gillespie, and Miss Evelyn Elizabeth Gillespie In loving memory of Juda Reinhardt, dear wife, mother and grandmother by her family. Given to the glory of God and in memory of our parents Ann and Roy Sawyer, and John and Jane Dunbar - love Val and Betsy Sawyer In loving memory of Marilyn Stradtman-Ellen Schlaefer In loving memory of Ed and Mary Schlaefer - Ellen Douglas Schlaefer In loving memory of Jack and Ellen Scoville - Ellen Douglas Schlaefer In loving memory of Elise Scoville McCutchen - Ellen Douglas Schlaefer In loving memory of Mary Ansley Scoville Crawford - Ellen Douglas Schlaefer In honor of Fredna Lee and the Chancel Choir - Ellen Douglas Schlaefer To the Glory of God sending His only son so that we may have life everlasting, and to the honor of Barbara McArthur In memory of Clinky and Cordes Seabrook from Anne and March Seabrook and family In memory of Don Richardson III from Anne and March Seabrook and family In memory of Allison Trotter Nation from Anne and March Seabrook and family In memory of John Sim, the love of my life. I miss you every day - Polly In memory of my beautiful fun-loving mom, Rankin Suber Craig - Polly In honor of my three grandchildren, Mary Russell, Maggie and Woods; you all make my heart so happy - Polly In honor of our parents and grandchildren - Ben and Kay Sloan In honor of Beau Snell given by his Mom Leslie, Dad Parker, Little sister Mills and Little brother Bennett To the glory of God and in loving memory of George Alexander and Margaret Huffman Jenkins - Doris and Ed Stapel In honor of Phyllis Staton - Bob In honor of the 2023 Alpha group - Bob Staton In honor of all Eastminster staff - Bob Staton In honor of Don Helms and his leadership of the Men's Prayer Breakfast group - Bob Staton In loving memory of Jackie and Bill Stormer - The Stormer family In loving memory of Harry O Harman, Jr. - The Stormer family In loving memory of Beth and Pete Caddell - The Stormer family In honor of our granddaughter Gray - Love Francie and Grandaddy In honor of our granddaughter Perkins - Love Francie and Grandaddy In loving memory of our parents, Mr. & Mrs. Eutace Studstill and Mr. & Mrs. Jake Strait by Harvey and Martha Studstill Given to the glory of God and in loving memory of our parents, Julia and Walter Theus, and Lolly and Frank Dana, by Nancy and Bill Theus Given to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for our grandchildren, William, Lolly, Warren, Nan, Charlie, Anna and Lee In loving honor of Jean and John Slaughter by Sharon, Drew, Luke and Claire Williams. In loving memory of Ellen and Kent Williams by Drew, Sharon, Luke and Claire Williams. We miss you every day. In loving memory of our daughter, Kacy. We miss you so much-John and Kathy Winterhalter In honor of the Weekly Weeders

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today's Joy Gift Special Offering: benefits retired Presbyterian church leaders. Thank you for your generosity in 2023 (\$5,313.52).

Blue Christmas Service is Today at 4 pm (Adult Reception Hall-ARH): If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, you are invited for a time of prayer and healing. This is a communion service. Bring a friend or neighbor who may benefit.

The Living Nativity is TUESDAY, Dec. 19 at 5 pm, 6 pm, & 7 pm (Courtyard): A host of little angels, wise men, livestock, and Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus will grace our new stable. Enjoy hot chocolate and a wonderful story!

Seniors Christmas Drop-in is this Tuesday, December 19 (ARH): Stop by between 10 am and 12 pm for Christmas cheer, music, and fellowship with Eastminster friends.

Mall to Manger Challenge Cards Are Available in our Welcome Centers: Pick up cards and give as gifts this year. Donations go to purchase children's Bibles through the Salvation Army. Please write "M2M" on the memo line of your check.

Transitions Third Thursday Meal is December 21: Drop off donations of pound cake, pasta salad, and bananas by 4 pm on Thursday, or serve at 5 pm. If you are interested in helping, please contact Alison McGowan: alisonmcgow-an11@gmail.com.

Serve at Transitions on Christmas Day (11:30 am - 12:45 pm): or drop off donations of Hawaiian Rolls, Mandarin oranges, bananas, pasta salad, Christmas Cookies or bars (3 per bag please), or snack bags of gorp. You can also make a monetary donation (checks made out to EPC, "Transitions" in memo line, please), or donate hygiene bags. Please see the email from Alison McGowan (12/10) for more details, or email her at alisonmcgowan11@gmail.com to volunteer.

Pledge Status Report as of December 11, 2023

Thank you to those who have pledged. If you have not yet done so, please give us an estimate of your giving to support Christ's work through Eastminster in 2024.

216 Pledges Increased
94 Pledges With No Change
27 Pledges Decreased
60 New Pledges
For a total of 397 pledges totaling \$3,584,393
82 pledges were made for 2022, but not yet for 2024

Dear Eastminster Church Family,

We are so glad you are worshiping with us today, and what a gift that our God has come to the world in the flesh in Jesus the Christ! Join us for our coming services (listed below) so that, filled with awe and wonder, each and every one of us may live lives of gratitude and generosity, reaching out to others as our Savior has first reached out to us.

In Christ,

Brad

Brad

Christmas Worship Services



5:00 PM: CHILDREN'S SERVICE
(CHILDCARE PROVIDED FOR INFANTS – 2K)
7:00 PM: FAMILY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
(CHILDCARE PROVIDED FOR INFANTS—5K)
9:00 PM: CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

MINISTERS—ALL OF US! STAFF

Dr. Bradley D. Smith, Pastor

Dr. Douglass D. Key, Senior Associate Pastor Rev. Emily Mooneyhan Lucinda Shields, Interim Organist Katie Herndon, EDS Director Blythe Lewis, Communications Director Alex Rogers, Facilities Manager Rev. Nicholas P. Demuynck, Associate Pastor Dr. Carol J. Byrd, Parish Associate Emily Higgins, Middle School Youth Director Anna Mills Cox, Sr. Communications Officer Caroline Bennett, Small Groups & Librarian. Emmet Hough, Christian Life Center Director

Rev. W. Croskeys Royall, Associate Pastor Dr J. Ben Sloan, Parish Associate Fredna Lee, Director of Music Ministry Bill Collins, Business Manager Christy Rippy, Treasurer