



# First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

## Worship Service

November 29, 2020 - 10:45 am

*We ask your help in caring for others throughout today's service.  
We would ask that throughout the service you wear a mask and observe social distancing.  
Also, please remember to fellowship **outside** following the service.*

**Prelude:** "Rhapsodie sur un Noel"  
Jean Langlais

Ryan Croyle

**Time of Welcome**

Rev. Dan Turis

### **The Liturgy of Advent**

**Soloist:** "My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout," (verse 1)

*My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,  
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the one who waits.  
You fixed your sight on the servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,  
So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?*

**Reading**

Rev. Tom Hall

**Prayer** (Unison)

**F** aithful God, so many of us are afraid. We live in world divided. We're afraid to speak our minds, and even worse, we're afraid to speak your truth. We thank you for the knowledge that Christ has come and will come again. As we light this first candle of Advent, we renew our confidence in you, even as we wait for the Christ to come again. *Amen.*

**Lighting of the First Advent Candle**

**Everyone sing:** My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

**Prayer of Confession** (Unison)

Rev. Tom Hall

**G** racious and loving God, we know that you are a God of justice and might, as well as a God of tenderness and mercy. We know of your promises to come again to set all things right. Yet we confess that we so often live as people without hope. God of Hope, forgive us. Teach us to speak and sing once more of the coming of your great day of justice.

**Silent Confession**

## Assurance of God's Grace

\*Hymn #60: "Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes"

Torey Gricks, *Tenor*

## Children's Message

Jana Hall

## Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

## Sermon – "Nothing is Impossible with God"

Rev. Tom Hall

## Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

**O**ur 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; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

## \*Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles' Creed

Rev. Dan Turis

**I** believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

## Call for the Offering



*After the service, please place your offering in the silver buckets located in the front and back of the sanctuary or use online giving available through GivePlus.*

**Anthem: "Breath of Heaven"**

Chris Eaton

Natalie Rogers, Soprano

*I have traveled many moonless nights  
Cold and weary with a babe inside,  
And I wonder what I've done?  
Holy father, you have come  
And chosen me now to carry your son.*

*I am waiting in a silent prayer;  
I am frightened by the load I bear.  
In a world as cold as stone,  
Must I walk this path alone?  
Be with me now, be with me now.*

*(Chorus) Breath of heaven, hold me together.  
Be forever near me, breath of heaven.  
Breath of heaven, lighten my darkness,  
Pour over me your holiness for you are holy,  
Breath of heaven.*

*Do you wonder as you watch my face  
If a wiser one should have had my place?  
But I offer all I am  
For the mercy of your plan.  
Help me be strong, help me be, help me...  
(Chorus)*

**\*Closing Hymn #196: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"**

**\*Benediction and Charge**

**Postlude: "Postlude on 'Hyfrydol'"**

Jason D. Payne

Ryan Croyle

**\*Please stand as you are able.**

# 60 Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

*Descant*

4 Our glad ho-san-nas, Prince of Peace, your wel-come  
 F C F C7 F C

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav-ior comes, the Sav-ior  
 2 He comes the pris-oners to re-lease, in Sa-tan's  
 3 He comes the bro-ken heart to bind, the wound-ed  
 4 Our glad ho-san-nas, Prince of Peace, your wel-come

shall pro-claim, and heaven's e-ter-nal  
 G7 C F Gm7

prom-ised long! Let ev-ery heart pre-  
 bond-age held; the gates of brass be-  
 soul to cure, and with the trea-sures  
 shall pro-claim, and heaven's e-ter-nal

arch-es ring with your be-lov-ed name.  
 F7 Bb Gm7 C7 F

pare a throne, and ev-ery voice a song.  
 fore him burst, the i-ron fet-ters yield.  
 of his grace to en-rich the hum-bled poor.  
 arch-es ring with your be-lov-ed name.

Words: Philip Doddridge (1735); based on Isaiah 61:1-2, P.D.  
 Music (RICHMOND 8.6.8.6): Thomas Haweis (1792); adapt. Samuel Webbe (1808); descant Craig S. Lang (1891-1971) used by permission of Novello and Company, Ltd, admin. G. Schirmer, Inc.

# Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

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*Waiting for the consolation of Israel. Luke 2:25*

1. Come, thou long-expect-ed Je-sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
2. Joy to those who long to see thee, Day-spring from on high, ap-pear;  
3. Come to earth to taste our sad-ness, he whose glo-ries knew no end;  
4. Born thy peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child and yet a king,

from our fears and sins re-lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
come, thou prom-ised Rod of Jes-se, of thy birth we long to hear!  
by his life he brings us glad-ness, our Re-deem-er, Shep-herd, Friend.  
born to reign in us for-ev-er, now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.

Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
O'er the hills the an-gels sing-ing news, glad tid-ings of a birth:  
Leav-ing rich-es with-out num-ber, born with-in a cat-tle stall;  
By thine own e-ter-nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a-lone;

dear De-sire of ev-'ry na-tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.  
"Go to him, your prais-es bring-ing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."  
this the ev-er-last-ing won-der, Christ was born the Lord of all.  
by thine all-suf-fi-cient mer-it, raise us to thy glo-rious throne.



# First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

## The Latest from **Pastor Tom Hall**

11-29-20 **Mary, (how) did you know?**

In this era of fake news, how do you know what's true?

We each have our preferred news outlets. We customize the news feeds on our phones. We cancel sources (and friends) who tell us things we don't want to hear.

We say something is true "if it works for you."

Of all the news that's ever been delivered in all of history, the news Mary received from the angel Gabriel has to be among the hardest to believe.

*"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"* (Luke 1:31-33)

If we received an email or a text like this, we'd block the sender.

But Mary didn't get to pick and choose her source. And I doubt she considered whether this news was going to "work for her."

What Mary did was to thoughtfully process what the angel had told her. English translations say she "wondered" or "pondered." In the end, she told the angel, *"I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."*

The Christian faith cannot just be true "if it works for you."

The Christian faith only works if it's true.

Mary considered the source...an angel.

Mary considered the message in light of what she knew about God.

Mary chose to believe.

And that's how she knew what the angel told her was true.