



“For my eyes have
seen your salvation
that you have
prepared
in the presence
of all peoples.”

LUKE 2:30-31

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMASTIDE

December 31, 2023

GATHERING

PRAYER FOR MEDITATION: *Saving God, the prophet Anna and righteous Simeon sang your praise and proclaimed Jesus our Lord to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Let us who seek redemption in this day prepare our hearts, that we may believe the good news of Jesus, receive the light of salvation, and live according to your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

OPENING SENTENCES (*Luke 2:30-32*)

Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: Now we have seen the saving love of the Lord,
ALL: *the glory of God's people and a light to all.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Improvisation on Regent Square
Dr. Terry McRoberts

Burkhardt

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Courtney Hiscox

One: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
ALL: *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*
One: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
ALL: *so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*
One: Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and prosper for us the work of our hands!
ALL: *Let us worship God!*

***HYMN: 140** *Once in Royal David's City*

IRBY

PRAISE GOD AND CONFESS OUR SINS

CALL TO CONFESSION (*based on 2 Peter 3:9*)

Rev. Courtney Bowen

Jesus our Lord came into an indifferent world, yet his life revealed the inner thoughts of many. Let us confess our sins before God and one another that we may receive release from our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Courtney Bowen

Gracious and loving God, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we look back and recognize the many ways we have fallen short of your glory: missed opportunities to share your love; times when we were silent when we could have spoken up for what was right; indifference to your claim on our whole lives through Jesus Christ; and a lack of gratitude for your amazing grace by which you save us and call us to be your people. Lord, forgive us. As we look ahead to a new year, free us from thinking we can save ourselves. Help us to follow where you lead. Show us how to be your children and your heirs, forgiven and freed to live for our God and for one another in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.
ALL: *Thanks be to God. Amen.*

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: 447 We Are Forgiven**

WE ARE FORGIVEN

*We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.
We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.*

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: The peace of Jesus Christ be with you.
Many: *And also with you.*

THE WORD

SPECIAL MUSIC

Oh, What a Beautiful City
Jeff Chambers

Van Ronk

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Libby Smith

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Courtney Bowen

***HYMN: 145 What Child is This**

GREENSLEEVES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Courtney Hiscox

FIRST READING

Galatians 4:4-7 (pg. 189)

Courtney Hiscox

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.
ALL: *Thanks be to God.*

SECOND READING

Luke 2:22-40 (pg. 59)

Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: This is the word of God for the people of God. The grass withers and the flower fades,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

What Our Eyes See

Rev. Courtney Bowen

RESPONSE

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (from *The Apostles' Creed*)

Rev. Courtney Bowen

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 Ghost, 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 sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

(At this time, please find the red friendship pad located toward the center isle on each pew, sign it, pass it down your row and back again, taking note of those who worship with you.)

OFFERING

Courtney Hiscox

OFFERTORY

Dance Prelude on Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella

Burkhardt

Dr. Terry McRoberts

*Doxology (Tune: 606)

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Dedicatory Prayer

Courtney Hiscox

SENDING

***HYMN: 546** *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*

SICILIAN MARINERS

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Rev. Courtney Bowen

POSTLUDE

O Hail This Brightest Day of Days

Bach

Dr. Terry McRoberts

(We request that you remain seated until after the Postlude and ask that you use the Postlude as a time to reflect upon the scripture that was read in today's service.)