

**CHRISTMAS 1 B
DECEMBER 27, 2020
1st Presbyterian of Rockaway**

Join Zoom Worship (login beginning at 12 Noon EDT)

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Phone in: (mobile or home phone) +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 742 347 8806 Passcode: 6562894

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

“What Child Is This?”

Traditional English Melody
Arranged by David Huntsinger

CALL TO WORSHIP

The people who sit in darkness

Have seen a great light.

Arise, let us leave the gloomy night;

Let us behold the glorious sight;

Make straight, then, the crooked highways;

Exalt the valleys and make low the mountains

To prepare the way of the Lord!

To make ready our hearts for his appearance,

Let us celebrate the Light of the World,

For upon us has the Light shined!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious and loving God, as we prepare to begin a new year, help us to discern what it is that moves us. Open our eyes to see the needs of our community, open our ears to hear your call, and open our hearts to be filled by the Holy Spirit.

Grant us the courage to use the gifts and talents you have blessed us with to do the work you have called us to. Build this community of faith, strengthening our bonds with one another and with you. Help us to support and encourage one another in our ministry. May all that we do praise you and be to your glory. Amen.

HYMN 134

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;

**Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy.**

**No more let sings and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of hi righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love.**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

The psalmist reminds us, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever." With this knowledge, we may confess our sins before God and one another with confidence.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we go about our days failing to proclaim your saving power with our voices or with our actions. We do not live as ones saved, but rather as people filled with fear and doubt. We often choose what is expedient, not what is right. We close our eyes and ears to those who are in need, and close our hearts to those we claim to love. We are quick to hurt others, and slow to right our wrongs. Forgive us, O God, for all the ways we have not lived into our relationship with you. Amen. (Silence)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, "God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us." In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

The lure and clamor of the world are so consuming, tumultuous, strident and demanding. We scarcely hear your still, small, whispered voice of calm. Quiet our restless nature as we breathe in deeply your peace and tranquility. Remove our fears, strivings and self-centered goals. Attune us to your Spirit. Fill us with your divine presence. Re-create us to embody your faith, love, peace and joy. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

*--May Inahashi, "Prayer for Responsive Reading," *Alive Now*, July/August 1989, 49.*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

ISAIAH 63:7-9

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior ⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

PSALM 89:1-4, 19-26

1. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
- 2. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!**
3. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!
- 4. Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!**
5. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.
- 6. He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**
7. Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,
- 8. fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!**
9. Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
- 10. Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!**
11. Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!
- 12. Young men and women alike, old and young together!**
13. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.
- 14. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord!**

HEBREWS 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

MATTHEW 2:13-23

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." ¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." ¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." ²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

SERMON

SALVATION PLAN

HYMN 153

IN BETHLEHEM A NEWBORN BOY

**In Bethlehem a newborn boy was hailed with songs of praise and joy.
Then warning came of danger hear: King Herod's troops would soon appear.**

**The soldiers sought the child in vain; not yet was he to share our pain;
But down the ages rings the cry of those who saw their children die.**

**Still rage the fires of hate today, and innocents the price must pay,
While aching hearts in every land cry out, "We cannot understand!"**

**Lord Jesus, through our night of loss shines out the wonder of your cross,
The love that cannot cease to bear our human anguish everywhere.**

**May that great love our lives control and conquer hate in every soul,
Till, pledged to build and not destroy, we share your pain and find your joy.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Responsive)

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

People: All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing was created.

Leader: The life that was in him became light for all people.

People: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Leader: To all who receive him, who believe in him, he gives power to become children of God.

People: The Word became flesh, a man named Jesus. He lived among us, full of grace and truth.

Leader: From his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. In his name God has sent the Holy Spirit to teach us and to remind us of all that he has said.

All: We believe that because he lives, we shall live also, to the glory of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

HYMN 136

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Refrain

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.**

Refrain

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! Above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.**

Refrain

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.**

Refrain

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"Good Christina Men, Rejoice"

German Melody, 14th Century
Arranged by John DeVries

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Sunday School will continue and meet on Dec. 27. Many thanks to Donna Van Duyne for this important ministry!

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Stephen Ministry



Things Are Different This Year

1. With the holidays upon us and during this year of Covid-19, your Stephen Ministry team continues to provide care to those suffering illness, loss, isolation and stress. Stephen Ministers talk with their care receivers by phone. We look forward to the time when we can meet in person with our care receivers but will continue to follow CDC, state & our church’s guidelines.

If you would like to talk with a Stephen Minister on a one-time basis, we would be glad to talk confidentially with you. Please call our Referrals Coordinator, Linda Kirby (973-316-0598 or lkirby717@aol.com) or one of our Stephen Leaders: Pat Warren (973-586-2923), Sue Scott (201-412-9285) or Betty Smith (973-432-9410).

At Stephen Ministries we continue to pray for you during the holidays and this pandemic.

In His Peace,
Your Stephen Leader Team