

First Sabbath Worship

December 1, 2007

Welcome and Announcements

Reid Tait

If you are a visitor, we wish you a special welcome. You are invited to enter into our worship completely. Please to stay after worship for dinner with us in the Activity Center. "H" indicates hymns found in the Church Hymnal. "C" indicates hymns found in Celebrate. May God's Spirit touch and renew your life today.

ENTER TO WORSHIP

PREPARING TO HEAR THE WORD

Preparation "Angels We Have Heard" (#142) Dale Wood

Choral Call to Worship "Declare God's Glory" (from the Psalms) Michael Patch
Come now into God's presence with songs as offerings.
With instruments and voices let all with gladness sing.

The Lord is strong and mighty and greatly to be praised.
Come now with thankful hearts, your hallelujahs raise.

*I will sing to God a new song, let the earth declare the glory of God.
Let ev'rything sing praise to God.
I will sing a joyful song, I will sing my praise to God.*

Leader: Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come into God's presence with singing!

People: For the Lord is a gracious God, whose mercy is everlasting; and whose faithfulness endures to all generations. (Psalm 100:1,2, 5)

* Hymn of Praise "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" No. 18

CALL TO CONFESSION: (based on Hebrews 4:14-16)

L: Remember that our Lord Jesus can sympathize with us in our weakness, since in every respect He was tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with boldness approach the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace.

P: **Merciful God, we come to confess our offenses against You. You alone know how often we have wandered from Your ways, wasted Your gifts, forgotten Your love. Have mercy on us, O Lord and hear our prayers.**

SILENCE for personal reflection and confession

L: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. May the God of mercy, who forgives all our sins, by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us always secure in his infinite love

Congregational Response "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" H-695

HEARING THE WORD

Children's Story

Caution: Angels at Work

Anthem

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

Basque Carol

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary,"
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother you shall be, all generations praise continually,
Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold."

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleases God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."

Scripture

Luke 1:5-55 *The Message* (adapted)

Claudette Thompson

During the rule of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest assigned service in the regiment of Abijah. His name was Zachariah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. Together they lived honorably before God, careful in keeping to the ways of the commandments and enjoying a clear conscience before God. But they were childless because Elizabeth could never conceive, and now they were quite old.

It so happened that as Zachariah was carrying out his priestly duties before God, working the shift assigned to his regiment, it came his one turn in life to enter the sanctuary of God and burn incense. The congregation was gathered and praying outside the Temple at the hour of the incense offering. Unannounced, an angel of God appeared just to the right of the altar of incense. Zachariah was paralyzed in fear.

But the angel reassured him, "Don't fear, Zachariah. Your prayer has been heard. Elizabeth, your wife, will bear a son by you. You are to name him John. You're going to leap like a gazelle for joy, and not only you—many will delight in his birth. He'll achieve great stature with God.

"He'll drink neither wine nor strong drink. He'll be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment he leaves his mother's womb. He will turn many sons and daughters of Israel back to their God. He will herald God's arrival in the style and strength of Elijah, soften the hearts of parents to children, and kindle devout understanding among hardened skeptics—he'll get the people ready for the Lord's coming."

Zachariah said to the angel, "Do you expect me to believe this? I'm an old man and my wife is an old woman."

But the angel said, "I am Gabriel, the sentinel of God, sent especially to bring you this glad news. But because you won't believe me, you'll be unable to say a word until the day of your son's birth. Every word I've spoken to you will come true on time—God's time."

Meanwhile, the congregation waiting for Zachariah was getting restless, wondering what was keeping him so long in the sanctuary. When he came out and couldn't speak, they knew he had seen a vision. He continued speechless and had to use sign language with the people.

When the course of his priestly assignment was completed, he went back home. It wasn't long before his wife, Elizabeth, conceived. She went off by herself for five months, relishing her pregnancy. "So, this is how God acts to remedy my unfortunate condition!" she said.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning!
You're beautiful with God's beauty,
Beautiful inside and out!
God be with you.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great,
be called 'Son of the Highest.'
The Lord God will give him
the throne of his father David;
He will rule Jacob's house forever—
no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered,

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
the power of the Highest hover over you;
Therefore, the child you bring to birth
will be called Holy, Son of God.

"And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

And Mary said,

Yes, I see it all now:
I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve.
Let it be with me
just as you say.

Then the angel left her.

Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,

You're so blessed among women,
and the babe in your womb, also blessed!
And why am I so blessed that
the mother of my Lord visits me?
The moment the sound of your
greeting entered my ears,
The babe in my womb
skipped like a lamb for sheer joy.
O Blessed woman, you who believed what God said,
believed every word would come true!

And Mary said,

I'm bursting with God-news;
I'm dancing the song of my Savior God.
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—
I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.
His mercy flows in wave after wave
on those who are in awe before him.
He bared his arm and showed his strength,
scattered the bluffing braggarts.
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,
pulled victims out of the mud.
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;
the callous rich were left out in the cold.
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.
It's exactly what he promised,
beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

Sermon

Gabriel's Perspective

Norman Moll

OUR RESPONSE

*** Hymn of Response**

"Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne"

H-140

Family Prayers

Norman Moll

Choral Response

"Our Father"

Moravian

Giving of Tithes and Offerings

Combined Budget

Dick Shell

Offertory

"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"

Johann Pachelbel

Prayer of Dedication

We bring these tokens of our gratitude. May we as a church of generous and joyful people use these offerings in ways that reflect renewed discipleship. Amen

*** Hymn**

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

H-121

ADMONITION I John 1:5 – 2:8 *The Message* (adapted)

L1: From the very first day, we were there, taking it all in—we heard it with our own ears, saw it with our own eyes, verified it with our own hands. The Word of Life appeared right before our eyes; we saw it happen! And now we're telling you in most sober words that what we witnessed was, incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us. We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!

L2: This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ: God is light, pure light; there's not a trace of darkness in him. If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we're not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin.

P: If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean breast of them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.

L1: I share this dear children, to guide you out of sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a Priest-Friend in the presence of the Father: Jesus Christ, righteous Jesus. When he served as a sacrifice for our sins, he solved the sin problem for good—not only ours, but the whole world's.

P: Here's how we can be sure that we know God in the right way: Keep his commandments. Anyone who claims to be intimate with God ought to live the same kind of life Jesus lived.

L2: My dear friends, I'm not saying anything new here. This is the oldest commandment in the book, and you've known it from day one. It's always been implicit in the Message you've heard. On the other hand, perhaps it is new —freshly minted as it is in both Christ and you—

P: The darkness is on its way out. The True Light is already blazing!

Benediction

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

Norm

Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heaven adore him: Angel hosts, His praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before Him, and extol our God and King;
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert ring,
Evermore and evermore!

Christ, to Thee with God the Father and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be.
Honor, glory, and dominions,
And Eternal victory,
Evermore and evermore!
Amen

Choral Blessing

“May the Lord Bless and Keep You”

Melvin West

May the Lord bless and keep you both now and evermore. Amen.

Postlude

Noel on “Angels We Have Heard” (#142)

Larry Visser

DEPART TO SERVE