



Worship Service for December 24, 2021 Christmas Eve

Prelude	Marshall Davies
Chiming of the Hour	Jan Lundy
Welcome	Pastor Mak
Centering Moment	Pastor Mak

Lighting of the Advent Candle The Lundy Family

LEADER: It is the season of short days and long nights. We light these candles to remember that even in natural darkness, our lights shine.

**ALL: The Christ Child we celebrate this evening
reminds us who we are – anointed and sacred children
of God.**

LEADER: With these flames we signify that Holy Light surrounds and fills us with love. There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires; stronger than despair; stronger even than death.

**ALL: Together we are walking the path of Christ,
choosing to love. Until the captives are free.**

LEADER: Until the homeless are sheltered. Until the hungry are fed and the broken are healed ... let us choose love.

ALL: Holy Love, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season. May the truth of hope, peace, joy, and love transform our hearts into actions of abundant life for all.

Carol Marshall Davies
TNCH #144 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

1st Reading Paula McKnight
The Gospel of Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The young woman's name was Mary. And the angel came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be

called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Special Music**Plymouth Choir****“The First Noel Pachelbel’s Canon”****2nd Reading****Pam Laham****The Gospel of John 1:1-5; 14-18**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not

one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a parent's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Parent's heart, who has made him known.

3rd Reading

Jan Lundy

"Divinized" by Rev. Mary Luti

The One who makes rich is made poor, taking on the poverty of flesh, that I may gain the riches of divinity. The One who is full is made empty, devoid a while of glory, that I may share that glory fully. What is this wealth of goodness?

What is this mystery that surrounds me? - St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390 CE)

It's an ancient theological question: Why did God become one of us?

Some Christians think it was to fix a big problem—to pay the debt incurred by Adam's sin. When he grows up, this theory goes, Jesus will bridge with his broken body the vast gulf our disobedience created between us and God.

If that's what you believe about God's purpose, you stand in a venerable stream of Christian tradition, and I won't say you're wrong.

I will say that it's not the only story the Church has told about why God drew so near to us, taking a body. There are other venerable traditions, and one of them imagines that the Savior came to divinize us, to give us God's own glory.

In this version, God empties out to take humanity in. God stoops down to raise us up. God accepts limits to dissolve the limits that made it seem as if God and humans were opposites. The great wonder of the Incarnation is that we're not.

If you believe this, then what you're waiting for in Advent is not someone to fix us but someone to reveal us to ourselves. The gift on the horizon is not a moral course correction but a bright mirror, a gaze, a joyous shock of mutual recognition — look, there, the eternal resemblance, the beauty, the dignity, the nearness, the ever-shining love.

Special Music

Plymouth Choir

“Grant Us Peace”

4th Reading

Pastor Mak

“The Worst Thing” by Chelan Harkin

The worst thing we ever did

was put God in the sky

out of reach

pulling the divinity
from the leaf,
sifting out the holy from our bones,
insisting God isn't bursting dazzlement
through everything we've made
a hard commitment to see as ordinary,
stripping the sacred from everywhere
to put in a cloud man elsewhere,
prying closeness from your heart.

The worst thing we ever did
was take the dance and the song
out of prayer
made it sit up straight
and cross its legs
removed it of rejoicing
wiped clean its hip sway,
its questions,
its ecstatic yowl,
its tears.

The worst thing we ever did is pretend
God isn't the easiest thing

in this Universe
available to every soul
in every breath.

Reflection

“Divine Reflection”

Pastor Mak

Special Music

“Be a Candle of Hope”

Plymouth Choir

Pastoral Prayer

Pastor Mak

Unison Prayer

Pastor Mak

Together we defy the darkness by being the Light. We make violence tremble by being peacemakers. When chaos and trauma cause distress, we counter by reaching for love and remembering joy. This day, when people are going hungry, give us bread to share. This day, when people are angry and hurtful, give us forgiveness to offer. When there is so much temptation to be selfish and careless, this day give us the strength to be kind and intentional. As we wait and prepare to celebrate the birth of a holy child, remind us that we are

all born holy and deserve love and tenderness. In the many names of Love, may it be so.

Invitation to Offering

Paula McKnight

Offertory Music

Marshall Davies

Doxology

Marshall Davies

Offertory Prayer

Pam Laham

LEADER: We open our hearts and spirits to new birth and transformation.

ALL: We commit what we have gathered to help us sow seeds of love into the world.

LEADER: May this offering be a new beginning, bring hope and peace wherever it is needed

ALL: We bless these gifts with joy and love to bring the beloved kin-dom to all who enter our midst.

Communion

Pastor Mak

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Pastor Mak

The Service of Light

Pastor Mak

Carol "Silent Night" Marshall Davies

***Benediction** Pastor Mak

***Carol** "Joy to the World" Marshall Davies

Postlude Marshall Davies