



MECHANICSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
300 East Simpson Street • Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-6596
717-697-0351 • www.mechpresby.org
December 24, 2017 • Fourth Sunday of Advent • 11am

Good News of Great Joy

BY SARAH ARE

inspired by Luke 2:1-20

“Good news of great joy for all people”
(Luke 2:10)



There are so many beautiful details tucked into the Christmas story – Mary swaddling her baby, the shepherds’ surprise, that little town of Bethlehem. It is easy to get caught up in all of those perfect details, and I think we should! However, as much as I love these details, I also love looking at the story with a big-picture lens.

In a day and age where thousands of refugees die a year, Nazis march in our streets, and racial tensions run deep, this promise – that the birth of Jesus is good news for *all*, and is *good* news – is a promise saturated in the gospel message.

In this drawing, I included an abstract star in the top corner of the page – a star whose light cannot be contained. This star reminds us of the star that guided the shepherds and wisemen to Jesus, as well as the ways in which Jesus is our light – particularly in the face of suffering. The repetitive circles symbolize that Jesus came for all – for God’s love and mercy are all-encompassing, covering all of creation and unifying us as family. What better news could there possibly be? Great joy, indeed. ~ SA

Prelude

Suite on the Second Tone of the Magnificat

J. Guilain

The late Dr. William Hays was my first professor of organ at college, and the first to introduce me to music of the French Classic Period. This Suite I’m offering for Prelude, Offertory, and Postlude today, was also one of the first pieces I ever worked on with him. His markings are still in my score, and playing this music brings back great memories. It’s my joy to present movements from this Suite for you today, music suited perfectly for end of Advent.

Welcome & Concerns of the Church

During this time, please take a moment to sign the pew pad and pass it along the pew, taking note of the persons sitting with you so you can greet them warmly by name.

Centering Prayer

*Introit #88, vv. 7

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

*Call to Worship

Isaiah 61:3

One:

When can we dream,
If not in this season of Advent?

All:

**When can we make room
In our hearts, in our worship, in our living,
For the possibility of something wildly and divinely new,
If not in Advent?**

One:

The Lord has sent you to dream of protestors draped in garlands not ashes,
Of the poor and mourning marked by oil rather than sackcloth,
Of churches resounding with praise not silence, so that
All the world sees this planting of the Lord,
This seed of a hope of God's glory.

All:

**Rejoice always. Testify to the light.
Live God's imagination.**

*Hymn #139, vv. 1-3

That Boy-Child of Mary

BLANTYRE

If you have a prayer request you would like to share with the pastors, please fill out a card from the pew rack and pass it to the center aisle where an usher will collect it during the first hymn. Please let us know of any changes.

*Conversation with God

Joy

One: "God," I asked, "What brings you joy?"
God said,

All: "Oh, my child, the list is so long. Hearing you say my name and seeing you soak in this beautiful creation bring me joy. When you stand with family, neighbors, and strangers, and sing or work together, my heart risks overflowing with joy. When you remember the children, and the quiet, and the hurting – I swear my heart could take flight."

One: "And when your heart takes flight," I asked, leaning forward with curiosity, "then what happens?"

And God leaned back and laughed the most musical, heart-filled, soul-reaching laugh I'd ever heard, and that's when I remembered – joy is contagious, and it is a gift. And then I started singing:

*Response #113

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

*The Passing of God's Love and Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you... **And also with you.**

Children's Moment

We invite children to remain in worship. There is a nursery available for infants through 5 year olds.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Response #128, v. 2 *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY
*Flocks were sleeping; shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of the gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you! Christ the babe was born for you!*

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson Luke 1:39-45 N.T. p. 57

Hymn #123 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

Second Lesson Luke 1:46-56 N.T. p. 57

Sermon *It Just Got Real* Mark A. Allio

***Hymn #139, vv. 4-6** *That Boy-Child of Mary* BLANTYRE

***Declaration of Faith** The Apostles' Creed
Our church states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ by using eleven creeds and confessions. In its earliest form the Apostles' Creed dates back to 180 AD. The word 'catholic' refers to the entire Christian church; 'quick' means living:

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.

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.**

Offering of Tithes & Gifts

Worshippers: Please place the top sheet of the fellowship pads in the offering plates.

Offertory *Suite on the Second Tone of the Magnificat* J. Guilain
Tierce en Taille (Melody in the Tenor)

***Response #147, v. 1** *The First Nowell* THE FIRST NOWELL
*The First Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.*

*Prayer of Dedication

***Hymn #134** *Joy to the World* ANTIOCH

***Charge & Benediction**

Greetings, favored ones. The Lord is with you and plans to do great things through you.

How can this be?

Whether at work or school, whether at home or in the world, the Holy Spirit is with you and will guide you in all you do and say so that you may be a blessing to the world.

Let it be according to your word.

***Response #136, refrain**

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

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

***Postlude**

Suite on the Second Tone of the Magnificat
Basse de Trompette (Melody in the Bass, Trumpet)

J. Guilain

*** Please greet one another in Christ's name ***

VISITORS: Welcome! Information about MPC can be found in the packets in the pews. If you are interested in additional information, please ask anyone around you or contact one of the pastors. Fair trade coffee and snacks are served after worship in the Gathering Area just outside the Sanctuary doors. This is also where you will find the restrooms, including baby changing stations. Children's worship kits are located in the back of the Sanctuary. Worship aids are available from the ushers. We're glad you're here!

KNOWN TO BE HOSPITALIZED

Marilyn Heckert – Messiah Village, Wagner 5

HOME FROM THE HOSPITAL

Millie Skelly

Christmas flowers may be picked up after tonight's Candlelight Services.

A sincere thank you to all who remembered the church staff with Christmas cards, gifts and treats! Your kindness is appreciated and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

A time of personal prayer is offered following both services. If you would like to pray with a pastor and one of the officers of the church, please meet them by the prayer room near the pulpit following the worship service.

TONIGHT – Christmas Eve Services – 5:30, 7:30 & 11:30 PM

DECEMBER 25, 11 AM – Christmas Communion Worship

DECEMBER 31, 11 AM – Christmas Worship

JANUARY 7, 8:15 & 11 AM – Worship & New Year's Communion
9:35 AM – Sunday School

If you or a family member is hospitalized or in need of pastoral care, call **717-896-0131** at any time. It will connect you to the church office and one of the pastors.

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| Ministers | All members of the congregation |
| Senior Pastor/Head of Staff..... | Rev. Kathryn Z. Johnston.....kjohnton@mechpresby.org |
| Associate Pastor for Youth & Young Adults | Rev. Mark A. Allio.....mallio@mechpresby.org |
| Director of Music | Mark McKeever |
| Christian Education Director | Cathay Snyder.....csnyder@mechpresby.org |
| Playful Beginnings Director..... | Karen P. Taylor |
| Mission Relations..... | www.pcusa.org/missionconnections |
| Find us online! | www.mechpresby.org • Twitter: @mechpresby • Facebook: Mechanicsburg Presbyterian Church |

More People Caring

Participating in Worship:
Greeters: Adrian & Kate Murray, Susan Miller
Ushers: Dan Hajnik, Tim Wonder, Amy Zullo, Larry Lichty
Reader: Esther Mullen
Liturgy: Rachel Hackenberg (CtW), Sanctified Art
Fellowship Hour: Joyce Lackey, Mary Polson

WEEK OF DECEMBER 24 – JANUARY 1, 2018

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| SUN | 11 AM | Advent 4 Morning Worship |
| | AM | No Blood Pressure Screening |
| | 5:30 PM | Family Christmas Eve Service |
| | 7:30/11 PM | Candlelight Service |
| TUE–MON | | Church Office Closed |
| SUN | 11 AM | Morning Worship |
| MON | | Happy New Year |

2018 Offering Envelopes are available for you to pick up in Fellowship Hall. If you can't find a box of envelopes with your name and would like them, please call/email the church office (717-697-0351).

If you would like to make contributions for this year, they must be postmarked December 31, 2017 for this year's financial statements.

2018 Flower Calendar – The new calendar to sponsor 2018 chancel flowers is located on the bulletin board in the Breezeway. Two vases (\$15 each) need to be sponsored each week. To sponsor a vase, enter your name on the date of your choice.

Service Cancellation – In the event that church services or events need to be cancelled due to inclement weather, we urge members to tune into ABC Channel 27 WHTM-TV or check the church's website: www.mechpresby.org. You can also subscribe to the church's emails at this address. Please share the information with others in an effort to reach everyone.

Save the Date! After the holidays, it's time to unwind and treat yourself to our annual Women's Retreat. This year we will have the Rev. Mim Harvey from Stop The Violence present our program on the book of Ruth. We will have a brief worship service followed by our program and light lunch. Reserve January 27 for what will be a very informative and enjoyable morning. Snow date will be February 10.

Playful Beginnings would love to have a strong Substitute List. Please contact Karen Taylor (717-697-4712) for details, or drop off your information in the black, preschool mail box. Include your name, phone number and days available. This is a paid position and clearances are required. It's a joy to spend time with our children!



The Sr. High and Adult Mission Trip: We will be going to the Tampa area **July 9th – 16th**! Cost will be \$275 (family rate will be \$175 per person). If you or your teen are interested **we need to know by January 14!**

Jan. 7 – Family Movie Night – *Shaun the Sheep: The Movie* - 6-8 PM: Everyone is invited to join us! Kids, parents, grandparents and teens!

Jan. 14 – Youth Group – 6-8 PM

Jan. 21 – Sky Zone and Dinner(ish) – Meet there at 4:45 PM. Cost is \$20 for two hours of jump time and a slice of pizza and a drink. We'll finish up at 7 PM.

Jan. 28 – Baked Potato Brunch

Questions or comments: contact Mark Allio (717-697-0351 or mallio@mechpresby.org)