

Trinitarian Congregational Church
TakeOut
Advent 3 B December 13, 2020

Bells	https://youtu.be/-6qZ9A6GFik	
Announcements		Rev. Rosemary
Prelude	“Of the Father’s Love Begotten” 13 th Century plainsong https://youtu.be/6j_qBOqjTaU	Chris Harris
Advent Candle	One Candle: An advent liturgy for 2020 by Rev. Karen Ware Jackson Permission is granted for home and congregational use. https://youtu.be/VR_rKBRzbRU	Margie Conner

Light one candle for joy.
Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but our joy cannot be contained.
Like a toddler, toppling the thrones of power with a gleeful swipe,
 Joy pierces our silence with song
 interrupts our sighing with laughter
 unshackles our fumbling feet to dance.
“My soul magnifies the Lord,” she whispers, “and my Spirit rejoices in God my savior.”
So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

Hymn	“One Candle is Lit” vs 3 https://youtu.be/VR_rKBRzbRU
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Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth, join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.
Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise. One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

Call to Worship	Margie Conner
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Leader: God is in our midst; do not fear.
 God delights to renew our lives in steadfast love.
People: God gathers us for this time of worship.
 God claims us and promises us a home.
Leader: Trust in God who is our strength and life.
 Give thanks to God, the source of our salvation.
People: We will sing praises and exalt God’s name.
 With joyous shouts, we will tell of God’s glorious deeds.
Leader: Rejoice in God, whatever your circumstances.
 Remember the good fortune God has shared with you.
People: We take courage as we seek God’s light.
 We open our hearts and minds to God’s leading.

Gathering Prayer

Margie Conner

Glorious God, in the midst of darkening days we rejoice in your light, as we anticipate your promises and look forward to ways that you reveal yourself to us. Let your presence be real to us in this hour. Strengthen us for victories over temptation, for renewal of our love for you and one another, for leadership in our church and service in our world. We give you thanks that you have called us into community and commissioned us as witnesses to your light. Grant us the courage and wisdom we need for the tasks you set before us. Amen.

Gloria Patri

<https://youtu.be/OLz3R1hnUjs>

Scripture Readings

Psalm 126

Margie Conner

- ¹ When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
² Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
³ The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
⁴ Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
⁵ May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
⁶ Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

John 1:6-9, 19-28

Rev. Rosemary

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹ And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²² Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³ He said,
“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’”
as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵ They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” ²⁶ John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Musical Reflection

“The Advent of Our God”
Aaron Williams, arr. Carol Tornquist
<https://youtu.be/f0w8GtsuhcE>

Chris Harris

Sermon

“Christmas Light”

Rev. Rosemary

Every day as I drive to and from the church I listen to NPR. And if I am lucky, along with the daily weather forecast I get a fuller report of astronomical events. Specifically, this time of year, I listen for the decreasing hours of daylight that mark this season, and I look forward to the winter solstice.

Light, in general, figures prominently in this season. Look around you; we have candles on the Advent Wreath, strings of lights on our houses, figures of light on lampposts (at least in Agawam). There are glowing logs in fireplaces, luminaries on walkways, and even a spotlight on our church’s crèche.

Of course, Scripture is filled with references to ‘the light’, from Genesis 1 where God created light and darkness, sun, moon and stars, to Revelations 22 where the city of God has no need for sun and moon because “the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb” (22:23). And in today’s scripture we see John, who came to bear witness to the light- ‘the true light that enlightens everyone’.

God commissioned this ordinary man to prepare God’s people for the coming of the Messiah. And so John told them what he had seen in the light God’s Spirit. He saw the coming of God’s kingdom like the dawn of a new day, and that light would bring with it everlasting life. And because he saw the coming of God’s Anointed One he called God’s people to repent, to turn back to God, to be renewed, restored and reformed.

John bore witness to the light, which was a marvelous thing. Here was a man who spoke hope to the forlorn, and offered life to the broken. Here was a man, too, who challenged the darkness and the corruption of the world, even among the religious establishment. But God did not just have one witness, one voice crying in the wilderness. No, from the first days of Moses, through Isaiah and Jeremiah, and all the prophets, God has called his people to bear witness to the light. And God didn’t stop after John, or Jesus, or even Peter and Paul. God is still calling his people, men and women of God, to bear witness to the light of Christ. God is even calling you.

You too are a witness to God’s light. But you don’t need to wear a camel hair shirt or eat locusts like John. And you don’t need to wear a pastor’s stole or have a Doctorate of Ministry. What you do need to have is the experience of God’s light shining on you. That light might come through a word or Scripture, or another person’s words. The light may come through an act of kindness that lifts you up from dark and gloomy day. The light may come by watching a sun-rise or catching sight of a falling star. But the light comes, and with it comes the experience that God is with you. That is the light that shines and overcomes all our darkness. In the midst of sorrow and loss, God is

with you, and the light shines with hope. In the midst of fear and danger, God is with you, and the light protects you. In the midst of confusion and uncertainty, God is with you, and the light guides you.

That is the heart of our witness. God calls us to witness – to tell our stories, the stories of our experiences of God’s light and life which has made a difference in our lives, as simple as it may seem, because even ‘a small light shines bright’, like a star in the night sky over Bethlehem.

Be a witness to God’s light, it will overcome the darkness of our world and it will reveal the glory of Christ. Amen.

Moment of Reflection What story of God’s light, life or love would you like to share?

Hymn “Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn”
<https://youtu.be/ufKhELqJB0Q>

1 Awake! Awake and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
sing out your joy, for Jesus is born, behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,
to open wide the heavenly door, and lives now inside us forever.

2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a-singing,
whose humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing.
Music to heal the broken soul and hymns of loving kindness,
the thunder of the anthems roll to shatter all hate and injustice.

3 In deepest night Christ's coming shall be, when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring.
One without voice breaks forth in song, a lame one leaps in wonder,
the weak are raised above the strong, and weapons are broken asunder.

4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night, though cold the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light, be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer, and love, our endless story,
may God fill every day we share, and bring us at last into glory.

Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use.

Prayers of the People

Rev. Rosemary

Glorious God, we thank you for the light of your love and grace that shines down upon us. We thank you for Jesus Christ, who came to reveal your great mercy and to renew in us the light of life. We thank you also for your Spirit, who opens our eyes to your truth, frees us from the shadows of

sin and suffering, and empowers us as your witnesses. And so with hope and joy, we come before you now, to seek your guidance and blessing in our lives.

We pray for your church and for this congregation. Grant us fresh insight into the wonders of your gospel, and renew our joy as your people. Give us the courage to let our light shine, so that all who long for your coming may discover your presence in their lives.

We pray also for our world. May all our leader have eyes to see the beauty of your reign and recognize the value of justice and peace that they may seek the true welfare of all people. And we pray for all who need your light and life this day. Grant your hope to the disheartened, your truth to the blind, your wisdom to the misguided, and your strength to the burdened. Grant also your healing to the ill, your comfort to the sorrowful, and your provision to the needy. We especially lift up (thanks, needs). And empower us with all we need to live your witnesses in all our words and deeds, that you may be glorified.

We praise you, glorious God, for the wonders of your grace, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Choral Response https://youtu.be/1AivVHv_mbc

Special Music "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" Piper Pichette, harp
<https://youtu.be/25Bq34rqfmU>

Offering

God's light is still shines today. And the message of God's love still needs to be made known in our world. We bear witness to the light of life through our personal efforts and our congregation's ministries. Our giving is both sign and a commitment to God's call. Let us dedicate our offerings with joy.

We bring these gifts to honor your Promised One, O God. May they empower us to fulfill your call as witnesses. May they extend to all people the light of your hope and the joy of your promises. May they restore the welfare of those who suffer, and bear the fruit of your reign. We ask this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Doxology <https://youtu.be/5I7PEGUPAXQ>

Common Commission

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Benediction

Go now into the world

By the tender mercy of our God, may the Dayspring from on high visit you,
may it give light to those who know darkness and live in the fear of death,
May it guide us all in the way of peace. Luke 1:78-79 adj

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Postlude

“The Holy and the Ivy”

<https://youtu.be/YFB9PRa9xDo>

Piper Pichette, harp