

Monroe United Methodist Church

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December 9, 2018 8:00 and 10:45 Worship

The Church Gathers in God's Name

PRELUDE Advent Hope (Savior of the Nations, Come) Bell Choir

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

How can I prepare a way for you to come? How can I make the paths straight for you to get to me? What blocks me from seeing you and hearing you? Take it away and speak to me during worship this morning, Lord, so I can meet you. Amen.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING CHORUS

**Holy Child within the manger, lead us ever in your way,
so we see in every stranger how you come to us today.
In our lives and in our living give us strength to live as you,
that our hearts might be forgiving and our spirits strong and true.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

HYMN O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (v 1, 2, 5, 6) #211

UNISON PRAYER

O God, we confess that our sins bring us unhappiness.
But we are powerless to stop sinning.
We are alienated from your grace by our evil thoughts and behavior.
Your grace frees us from accusation of sin. By the work of Jesus
Christ, we are reconciled to you. Let all our Christmas celebrations
remember we are reconciled by the One whose birth we celebrate.

We pray for courage and strength to continue in faith, established and firm, never to move from the hope held out in the gospel. Amen.

TIME FOR SILENT PRAYER

The Church Hears God's Word

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Who Is Mary?

SPECIAL MUSIC The Holly and the Ivy/The First Noel (8:00)
Patty James, violin and Cathy Kuehl, viola
When Will Messiah Come? Chancel Choir (10:45)

LIGHTING THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE: Peace Isaiah 9: 6,7

EPISTLE READING

Colossians 1: 15 - 23, NIV

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation — if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 3:1-15, The Message

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod, ruler of Galilee; his brother Philip, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, ruler of Abilene; during the Chief-Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—John, Zachariah's son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching a baptism of

life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet:

Thunder in the desert!

"Prepare God's arrival! Make the road smooth and straight!
Every ditch will be filled in, every bump smoothed out,
The detours straightened out, all the ruts paved over.
Everyone will be there to see the parade of God's salvation."

When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the popular thing to do, John exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to deflect God's judgment? It's your life that must change, not your skin. And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as 'father.' Being a child of Abraham is neither here nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make children from stones if he wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire."

The crowd asked him, "Then what are we supposed to do?"

"If you have two coats, give one away," he said. "Do the same with your food."

Tax men also came to be baptized and said, "Teacher, what should we do?"

He told them, "No more extortion—collect only what is required by law."

Soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He told them, "No shakedowns, no blackmail—and be content with your rations."

The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, "Could this John be the Messiah?"

SERMON

The Church Responds to God

SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS AND JOYS

RECEIVING TITHES AND OFFERINGS with DOXOLOGY

PERSONAL PRAYER, PASTORAL PRAYER, LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light #206

DEPART WITH BLESSING

