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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor  
Mrs. Amy Peck, Worship Choir Director  
Mr. Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

December 22, 2024

9:45 AM

**All is Bright: Yet Our Hopes are too Weary to Shine**

*Silent Night: The Paradox*

Fourth Sunday of Advent

*Thank you for worshipping with us today. If you are a guest, we invite you to take a moment to complete a visitor's card located in the back of the pew in front of you and place it in the offering plate when it is passed. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary.*

*We welcome infants and children and all their wiggles & voices in our worship! For your comfort, we also have a children's corner in the back narthex where your child can relax and play and you can still participate in the worship experience. We have children's books and activity bags for them to enjoy! Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!*

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**INVITATION INTO THE PARADOX**

**HYMN** (v. 1)

*Silent Night*

**ALL SING: Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright. Round yon Virgin,  
Mother and Child, Holy Infant so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace.  
Sleep in heavenly peace .**

**LIFE IN THE PARADOX**<sup>1</sup>

David Firestone & Michael Maletz

**UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY—CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE NO. 106 NCH** (red hymnal, see next page, vs. 1-2, 6)

*While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night*

# While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

Piano  $\text{♩} = 80$

1. While shep - herds watched their  
 2. "Fear not," he said for  
 3. "To you, in Dav - id's  
 4. "The heaven - ly Babe you  
 5. Thus spake the se - raph,  
 6. "All glo - ry be to

3

flocks by night, All seat - ed on the ground, The  
 might - y dread Had seized their trou - bled mind, "Glad  
 town this day, Is born of Da - vid's line, The  
 there shall find To hu - man view dis - played, All  
 and forth - with Ap - peared a shin - ing throng, Of  
 God on high, And to the earth be peace: Good

6

an - gel of the Lord came down, And  
 ti - dings of great joy I bring To  
 Sav - iour, who is Christ, the Lord, And  
 mean - ly wrapped in swath - ing bands, And  
 an - gels prais - ing God, who thus Ad -  
 will hence - forth, from heaven to men, Be -

8

glo - ry shone a - round, And glo - ry shone a - round  
 you and all man - kind, To you and all man - kind.  
 this shall be the sign: And this shall be the sign.  
 in a man - ger laid, And in a man - ger laid.  
 dressed their joy - ful song: Ad - dressed their joy - ful song:  
 gin and nev - er cease, Be - gin and nev - er cease!"

## \*TIME OF CONFESSION<sup>1</sup>

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: God, you invite us into the mystery of Your serene love.

**C: We sing, "All is bright,"**

L: but the paradox is that the nights are getting longer and longer,

**C: and we confess that our bodies, minds, and spirits are too weary to shine Your Light into the darkness. Forgive us. Rekindle the Christ-light in our hearts that we might shine it into the shadows. Ignite our souls so that we might hear again the message of the Messiah.**

*(Silence is held for personal reflection)*

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**SCRIPTURE**

*Luke 2:8-9 (CEB)*

**HOMILY**

**CHOIR ANTHEM**

*Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

by Prichard/arr. Harlan

**RESPONSE**

L: Alleluia, Christ shall come!

**C: Come, thou long-expected Jesus.**

L: And the world waited in darkness for the coming of the Truth, the Light, the Way.

**C: Born to set God's people free.**

L: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

**C: His coming was foretold by the prophet Isaiah...then announced to a young, frightened virgin named Mary.**

L: Mary wondered--How can this be? She was overwhelmed by God's goodness to her. And though she didn't understand it yet. She trusted in the Lord.

**C: And He shall come. Listen—Mary proclaims it as so!**

**CHOIR ANTHEM**

*Canticle of Mary*

by Harlan

**RESPONSE**

L: Alleluia, Christ shall come!

**C: God fulfilled His promise to send a Savior.**

L: On a quiet night, with no pomp or pretense, He came to us.

**C: Alleluia, Christ shall come!**

L: To shepherds on a hillside, His coming was announced. What could it mean? They were stunned and amazed as they ran to the manger.

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR***Angels We Have Heard on High*

Traditional

**RESPONSE**

L: Led by a star, astrologers called wise men would soon chart their path

**C: to worship the newborn King.**

L: May we, like the shepherds and wise men look for God's promises—

**C: ...wait patiently for God's truth to be revealed...**

L: ...and follow His light to lead us to the joy that only He can bring.

**C: Let us follow the light!**

**CHOIR ANTHEM***Child of the Light*

by Harlan

**RESPONSE**

L: The people walking in darkness have seen a great Light:

**C: on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a Light has dawned.**

L: Because of the unspeakable Gift given to us by God the Father,

**C: the good news chimes throughout the land.**

**HOLY DINGALINGS***Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Traditional

**RESPONSE**

L: In Jesus was life, and the Life was the Light of all people.

**C: Proclaim Him Christ the King.**

L: Tell the Good News this season...

**C: Rejoice! and proclaim Him Christ the Lord!**

**WORSHIP CHOIR***Good Christian Men Rejoice*

arr. Harlan

**RESPONSE**

L: Christ came to show us truth...

**C: ...and to give light for our way...**

L: We worship Christ not only for Who He is, but because of what He did for us.

**C: He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.**

L: Whoever believes in Him will not live in darkness, but have abundant life.

**C: And so we seek your Light to guide us to the abundant life you offer.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**ALL: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**CHOIR ANTHEM**  
**RESPONSE**

*Carol of Light*

by Harlan

L: Arise, shine for your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

**C: God of grace, thank you for the Light you bring to the darkest corners of our weary hearts.**

L: And yet, there are those who haven't experienced Your peace...those who remain in darkness. What shall we do?

**C: We embrace Your Light.**

L: We must share His light. We must share His love.

**C: We celebrate Love begotten of the Father.**

L: We celebrate Life given of the Son.

**C: And the Spirit moves us to share the Light with all we can offer back to the world.**

**A TIME FOR SHARING**

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP**

L: So let us share in this moment of Generosity and Discipleship, to offer back to God as we are able, to share God's light with those like the shepherds who have been left out in the dark.

**OFFERTORY** (played by Hayden McCarthy)

*O Christmas Tree*

Anchutz

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

L: God of light and life, take these gifts as an offering of our gratitude.

**C: Use what is given here to shine your light on the lives of those who need to hear it the most.**

L: And as we wait for your coming, may the darkness that surrounds us not stop the celebration

**C: Christ is coming! Amen.**

**CHOIR ANTHEM**

*Of the Father's Love*

arr. Harlan

**RESPONSE**

L: O Come, let us adore the Light of the World!

**C: Together, we will sing the Good News!**

**\*CLOSING HYMN NO. 154 NCH** (black hymnal, see next page)

*Go Tell It on the Mountain*

# Go Tell It on the Mountain

African American Spiritual

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Piano  $\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five lines of music. The first line starts with a piano dynamic marking and a tempo marking of quarter note = 80. The lyrics are: 'Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hill and'. The second line starts with a measure rest of 4 measures, then continues with: 'ev - ery where. Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je-sus Christ is'. The third line starts with a measure rest of 8 measures, then continues with: 'born! 1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er 2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when 3. Down in a low - ly man - ger the'. The fourth line starts with a measure rest of 11 measures, then continues with: 'si - lent flocks by night, Be - hold through-out the lo! a - bove the earth rang out the an - gel hum - ble Christ was born, and God sent us sal -'. The fifth line starts with a measure rest of 14 measures, then continues with: 'heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light. cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth. - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.'

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hill and

4  
ev - ery where. Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je-sus Christ is

8  
born! 1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er  
2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when  
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger the

11  
si - lent flocks by night, Be - hold through-out the  
lo! a - bove the earth rang out the an - gel  
hum - ble Christ was born, and God sent us sal -

14  
heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
- va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

**\*BENEDICTION**

L: In the silence and the shouts,

**C: come, Lord Jesus.**

L: In holy contentment and the exhaustion of faith,

**C: come, Lord Jesus.**

L: In the calm and eager anticipation,

**C: come, Lord Jesus.**

L: In shine of hope and the weary sighs,

**C: come, Lord Jesus.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Wake, Awake for Night is Flying*

by Walthier

***Thank you to all who participated in the Cantata!***

**Worship Choir**

**Soprano**

Andrea Adams  
Debbie Butcher  
Lana Fritz  
Carol Hartman  
Norma Hull  
Barb Neff

**Alto**

Brenda Beyer  
Jen Miller

**Tenor**

Mike Gibbs  
Michael Maletz

**Bass**

Tom Bair  
Braden Bicher

**Accompanist**

Travis Pinci

**Choir Director**

Amy Peck

**Children's Choir/Bell Choir/Holy Dingalings**

Jack Bicher            Macey McCarthy  
Vanessa Bicher        Freddie Northridge  
Addie Bickleman      Cannan Ramsey  
Hayden McCarthy     Nova Ramsey

**Special Musician**

Hayden McCarthy

## References

<sup>1</sup>Life in the Paradox and Time of Confession were written by Deb Herlocker for our Advent series.

### Special thanks to our Advent Team!!!

Elaine Bevivino, Deb Herlocker, & Cindy Hogentogler

Thank you to Lee & Patsy Brown for donating our beautiful Christmas Tree and the Christmas wreaths!

We also give thanks for the nativity scene at the front of the church. Longtime Mt. Zion member, Dick Koch, built the right side, minus the dome about 40 years ago. Then a bit later... as the inn keeper was more “prosperous,” he built the left side. He added the “dome” 15 years ago, and his son Karl reworked the lighting before donating to the church after Dick’s passing last winter.

Thank you to all serving in worship this morning!

**Bearer of Light:** Macey McCarthy

**Life in the Paradox:** David Firestone & Michael Maletz

**Welcome Team Members—**Deb & Terry Barnes, Tori Everhart, & Melissa Shindler

**Liturgist—**Tama Allison

**Tech Team—**Jack Herlocker, John Kollasch, & John Schriver