



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We trust our
belovedness*

Our Worship of God

December 24, 2023

11:15 am

(† Indicates those who are able, please stand)

~ Fourth Sunday of Advent ~

Pre-Service Music

Piano Selections
Colleen Ostercamp, *piano*

Welcome

† Call to Worship (responsive)

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

Friends, this is the day that our God is still making.

Let us worship our incarnate God.

†Opening Song

O Come O Come Emmanuel

†Passing the Peace of Christ

Homily

Pastor Brittany McDonald Null

*- How Does a Weary World Rejoice? -
We Sing Songs of Hope*

Scripture Readings

Christina Ray and Noah Hartsfield

Luke 1:46-47, 67-68

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

†Hymn 135

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (v.1)

Poem for Advent: The Sound of Hope

by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

*We've been singing a sad song
for quite some time,
the melody syncing with our heartbeats,
the lyrics stamped to the front of our minds. You say, sad songs are honest.
It's hard to disagree, for sad songs tap us on the shoulder.
Sad songs remind us
of the 100 different corners
heartbreak could be behind.*

But I don't have it in me to sing a sad song forever.

*So despite the news, despite the aches in my body,
despite the phone call last night
that says she's waiting for the test results,
despite yesterday's shooting, despite the unknown and unchanged,
I am going to sing a song of hope.*

*Like a canary in a snowstorm,
I don't need another song of what is;
I need a song of what could be.
So sing with me.*

*Our voices may get drowned out by the wind, but surely someone will ask:
Was that a flash of yellow in the snow?
Was that the sound of hope?*

Lighting the Candle of Hope

Ally and Willow Lautenschlager

The hope of God is honest. It names forthrightly the struggles of our shared lives – the evils and suffering that make hope both difficult and necessary. It reaches to us in the places bare, vulnerable, tender, and tired. And hope says hang on. Keep on. Press on with purpose. What feels impossible can become possible with God. So today we light the candle of hope as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring hope into a weary world. Amen.

Brief moment of silence.

Hymn of Hope

Light Dawns on a Weary World (v. 3)

*Hope blooms in a weary world when creatures,
once forlorn, find wilderness reborn.
Hope blooms in a weary world: the promised green of Eden comes.*

*The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;
The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.*

- How Does a Weary World Rejoice? -
We Sing Songs of Peace

Scripture Readings

Luke 1:48-50, 69-75

for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his child David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
in his presence all our days.

†Song of Peace

Glory (Let There Be Peace)

Time of Reflection

How have you experienced Peace?

Special Music

In the Bleak Midwinter

Noah Hartsfield, *bells*
Colleen Ostercamp, *piano*

Lighting the Candle of Peace

Peace is the gift of God that follows practicing care for each other and living with moral integrity. Prophets bear testimony to the barriers of peace among us. They chant faithfully in response to histories and present realities of racist violence, “no justice, no peace!” They echo the scriptures calling for justice and peace to rise and kiss. As we light this candle, we take a moment to reflect on an injustice that keeps people and communities from resting into the peace of God and calls us to deepen our engagement in the coming year. So today we light the candle of peace as a reminder and a charge.

With God’s help, may we bring peace into a weary world. Amen.

Brief moment of silence.

Sharing Our Gifts

Music for Peace

Comfort Ye My People

Jonathan Ray, *soloist*

from Handel’s Messiah

- How Does a Weary World Rejoice? -
We Sing Songs of Joy and of Justice

Scripture Readings

Luke 1:51-53, 76-77

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

†Song of Longing

The Whole World is Waiting

Poem: The Last Time I Saw God

by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

*The last time I saw God face to face
I was looking at a bed of tulips.
God was every color of red.
I was merely a mortal,
in awe of it all.*

*The time before that,
we were tying back the curtains,
looking for stars.
God was the deepest purple
and the brightest light.*

*The time before that,
the city was soft with snow.
God was the quiet
that tucked us all in.*

*And in between these small gifts
there were newborn babies,
and sapling trees,
homemade bread,
the sound of a church singing on Sunday.*

...

*Why, yes, we are lucky.
We are more than lucky
for the moments
when delight and awe
unzip the weight
we carry around.*

Lighting the Candle of Joy

John and Sandy Hall

Joy does not keep us from grief or hide the world's pain away. It brings its own offerings of delight, beauty, laughter, and sits them beside sorrows. Joy is the eternal abundance of small miracles that tether us to God's aliveness even when death surrounds. As we light this candle of joy, we reflect on the sources of plenty in our lives – the feasts of holy abundance that sustain our spirits. So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.

Brief moment of silence.

†Hymn 20

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (vs. 1-2)

- How Does a Weary World Rejoice? -
We Sing Songs of Love

Scripture Readings

Luke 1:54-55, 78-79

He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Because of the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

†Song of Christmas

Noel

The greatest commandment – the one through which everything else must be interpreted: Love invites us, challenges us, changes us. Love is intimate and love is collective – it seeks a world of flourishing, within and without, for all life. As we light this candle, we reflect on the barriers that keep us from living out our full capacity to love and celebrate the freedom God has given us to break down those barriers together. So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen.

Brief moment of silence.

Affirmation of Faith (unison)

**We believe
that hope can change the world.
We believe that God uses ordinary people,
like an unwed teenage mother,
for extraordinary good.**

**And we believe
that each of these ordinary people
can make a difference.
We know that grief, fear, and suffering abound.
We know that suffering quells joy
and makes it harder to hope.**

**But we choose hope anyway.
In the face of hardship,
we hope together.
We hope with God.
We hope for a better world.
This is our song.
We believe; help our unbelief.
In Christ's name we pray, amen.**

†Hymn of Commitment

Love Came Down at Christmas

1. Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di - vine;
2. Wor - ship we the God - head, Love in - car - nate, Love di - vine;
3. Love shall be our to - ken, Love be yours and love be mine,

Love was born at Christ - mas, Star and an - gels gave the sign.
Wor - ship we our Je - sus: But where with for sa - cred sign?
Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.

WORDS: Christina G. Rossetti, pub. 1885. MUSIC: "Gartan"; Irish melody. Public Domain.

Life of the Church

†Benediction

Family of faith,
as you leave this place,
you go into a weary world—
so speak tenderly.
Do the good that is yours to do.
Choose connection. Hold onto hope.
And remember that Christ
took on flesh for you.
You are God's beloved.
So go rejoicing.
The world needs it. Amen.

†Postlude

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Colleen Ostercamp, *organ*

arr. Samuel Metzger

Worship Notes

Glory (Let There Be Peace), CCLI Song # 7071972 Chris Stevens | Matt Maher | Rachel Taylor Popadic

O Come O Come Emmanuel (Veni Emmanuel), CCLI Song # 3198 John Mason Neale | Thomas Helmore

Noel, CCLI Song # 7050419 Chris Tomlin | Ed Cash | Matt Redman

The Whole World Is Waiting, CCLI Song # 7229442 Kate Hurley | Lenora Rand

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee, Words: Henry Van Dyke, 1907. Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824.

Love Came Down at Christmas, by Christina Rossetti

Call to Worship and Affirmation of Faith by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Liturgy for the Advent Candles from Enfleshed.com

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Week at a Glance

Sunday, December 24

- 10:15 am Spiritual Formation Hour –Adult, Youth & First Kids Sunday School
- 11:15 am Combined Worship in the Sanctuary
- 11:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25-Tuesday, December 26

OFFICES CLOSED for Christmas Holiday

Thursday, December 28

- 10:30 am First Baptist Women’s Zoom Book Study

Friday, December 29

OFFICES CLOSED for New Year Holiday

Sunday, December 31

- 10:15 am Brunch Worship in the Fellowship Hall

Monday, January 1-Tuesday, January 2

OFFICES CLOSED for New Year Holiday

Announcements

Welcome Visitors!

If you are visiting, we are so glad to have you with us! If you would like to receive more information about First Baptist and our ministries, you can fill out a connection card at the welcome table, scan the QR code in the bulletin, or visit our website at fbc-columbia.org/connect.



Self-Study Survey

Today is the final date to complete the Self-Study Survey, which can be found at <https://bit.ly/FBCCCOMOSurvey>. Paper copies are available upon request. The deadline to complete the survey is December 24. The Self-Study Committee will share a summary of this survey at two Table Talk sessions. Both Sundays will be structured with combined worship at 10:15 am. Both Table Talks will take place in the Fellowship Hall with pastries, fruit, coffee, and juice provided by the church. Youth are encouraged to participate, and childcare will be provided.



- **January 7, 2024** - Immediately following combined worship, the self-study team will present a summary of the Values and Vision sections of the survey and conversation will center around our Values and Vision.
- **February 4, 2024** - Immediately following worship, the self-study team will present a summary of the Pastor Skills, Characteristics, and Tasks sections of the survey and conversations will focus on the skills and responsibilities of our next Senior Pastor.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service- Tonight, December 24

11:00 pm in the Sanctuary

With joy, we will celebrate the coming of Christ with carols, a retelling of the Christmas story, and the tradition of sharing the light with candles as we sing “Silent Night.” Bring family and friends and join us as we worship in the Sanctuary at 11:00 pm.

Forward in Faith

We ask our faith community to consider partnering with us by pledging their financial support. Our theme for this year's annual pledge drive is Forward in Faith. As we move into our 200th year of ministry, we wanted a theme that reflected the church's commitment to the future. Your pledge ensures that our unique progressive Christian voice will continue. You can pledge at <https://fbc-columbia.org/giving/>.



Sundays of Christmastide

See below for the worship schedule beginning on December 24:

- December 24 at 11:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- December 31 at 10:15 am – Brunch worship in the Fellowship Hall
- January 7 at 10:15 am – Combined worship in the Fellowship Hall with Pastoral Resident Caleb Cooke preaching, followed by a church-wide conversation.

New Year's Eve Brunch Worship

We will celebrate New Year's Eve on Sunday, December 31, with Brunch Worship at 10:15 am and gather in the Fellowship Hall around tables to worship God through song, food, and conversation. You can contribute to worship by bringing a yummy potluck dish to share. Brunch Worship will be in-person only and takes the place of all other worship offerings for the day.

Annual Business Meeting - Sunday, January 21

10:15 am - Fellowship Hall

Join us Sunday, January 21 at 10:15 am in the Fellowship Hall for our Annual Business Meeting. We will vote on the Nominating Committee report and elect our leadership for 2023. Then, we will hear a report from the finance committee and vote on the 2023 budget.



First Baptist Church
columbia, mo

Rev. Brittany McDonald Null, Pastor of Families and Spiritual Formation

Caleb Cooke, Pastoral Resident

Jonathan Ray, Music Director-Traditional Worship

Shelby Myers, Awakening Worship Praise Band Director

Colleen Ostercamp, Pianist and Organist

Noah Hartsfield, Handbell Director

Susan Goudie, Administrative Assistant

Brenda Rice, Administrative Assistant for Web, Facilities, and Arts

Mike Ide, Custodian

Marcy Douglas, Childcare Coordinator

Ella Pritchett, Student Intern