

**ST. DAVID'S (SHERMAN'S) UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 20, 2020

10:00 AM

WELCOME

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

O God, in this Advent season, You reveal again Your coming into the world. In this busy time, thank You for being right here with us. Thank You for revealing Yourself afresh in the midst of our distractions. Give us attentive hearts and spirits to discern Your presence in our midst. We pray for those suffering or struggling in mind, body, or spirit, and for those who may feel that You are far away. Reveal Yourself to them, that they may know Your love. Strengthen us to be fully present with them in their time of need, as effective ministers of Your grace and mercy. In the holy name of the Savior who is coming. AMEN

BELLS: "Joy to the World"

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING:

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is joy, joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always.

OPENING HYMN: "Once in Royal David's City"

- 1** Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.

- 2** He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall:
with the poor, and mean, and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 And our eyes at last shall see him,
thro' his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above:
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

4 Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
when like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

CHILDRENS MESSAGE: Miss Dee

CALL TO CONFESSION

The promises of God are meant for all to enjoy. Yet we have broken covenant and declared our independence from the Giver of life. Then, when we are brought down from the thrones of our pretension, we wonder why. Let us confess the sins that separate us from God's promises.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we know that You are here with us, but too often we fail to see, hear, or feel Your presence because of the many distractions and demands of the holiday season. We confess our weariness and our anxiety, our worries and fears. We know, Gracious God, that in our busyness, we do stumble and fall. We find ourselves hurting and in distress. We come before You now confessing our faults and all the ways we fall short of Your call to us.

A TIME OF SILENT PERSONAL CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God does not turn away from steadfast love, even when we are unfaithful. God's mercy is for all who humbly seek it. If we have chosen to receive forgiveness and to move away from self-absorption, we will understand God's pardon and live joyously within it.

HOLY SCRIPTURES: Luke 1:26–38; Romans 16:25–27

LUKE 1:26–38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

ROMANS 16:25–27

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the

eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

SERMON: “Prophet People”

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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

BENEDICTION

God sends us out, empowered by the gospel, to fulfill our appointed roles among God’s people. In obedience and joy we pass on to others the love we have received from our maker.

CLOSING HYMN: “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

1 Come, thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

2 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.

(REPEAT VERSE 1)

HYMN NOTES

"Once in Royal David's City" was written by Mrs. Cecil Alexander, who also wrote the words to the hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'. Mrs. Alexander was born Miss Cecil Humphreys in Dublin, Ireland, in 1818, and married the Anglican clergyman William Alexander in 1850, two years after the publication of 'Once in Royal David's City' in 1848 in a hymnbook named *Hymns for Little Children*.

'Once in Royal David's City' was set to music in 1849, by the composer Henry John Gauntlett, who read the poem and liked it. The carol has traditionally been the first carol sung in the annual 'Carol's from King's' service at King's College Chapel in Cambridge, and has opened the service for the last 95 years, beginning in 1918 and first broadcast in 1928.

"Once in Royal David's City" first appeared in her collection, *Hymns for Little Children* (1848), in six stanzas. The text of this hymn, along with others, were intended to musically and poetically teach the catechism. This hymn is based on the words of the Apostles' Creed, "Born of the Virgin Mary," and is in six stanzas of six lines each. Even though this text is included in the Christmas liturgical sections of most hymnals, the narrative painted by Alexander truly relates to the entire "youth" of Christ and not just his birth.

The text takes Jesus lowly birth in Bethlehem where according to the New Testament, Jesus was born to His heavenly realm. The hymn focuses on the humble and lowly origins of Jesus and yet Jesus is destined to become the Savior of all mankind. Mrs. Alexander draws a link between Jesus' human incarnation and humans everywhere — The Jesus of 'Once in Royal David's City' is someone to identify with because he is like us, and he understands human suffering and human struggles.

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus." In 1744, Charles Wesley considered Haggai 2:7 and looked at the situation of orphans in the areas around him. He also looked at the class divide in Great Britain. Through this train of thought, he wrote "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" based upon Haggai 2:7 and a published prayer at the time which had the words:

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

Wesley adapted this prayer into a hymn in 1744 and published it in his "Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord" hymnal.

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" was the first of a number of Wesley's hymns that became known as the "Festival hymns". These "Festival hymns" were published outside of Methodism by German, John Frederick Lampe in 1746. The hymn came into popular knowledge across Christian denominations in England via popular Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon made a Christmas sermon in London in 1855 when he was 21 and included sections of "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" in it. He did this to illustrate his point that very few are "born king" and that Jesus was the only one who had been born king without being a prince. (Source: Wikipedia)

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS, December 20, 2020

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES: Although we had hoped to worship inside on Christmas Eve and were making plans to make that happen, the current Covid-19 situation simply prohibits indoor worship at this time. **Christmas Eve worship services will be Parking Lot services—two (2) services are scheduled, 6:30 PM and 9:00 PM.** There *will not* be a 4:00 PM service.

Yes, we are all disappointed, but the welfare and safety of our worshipers is our top priority, as it should be with all people of faith. *"In humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others."* (Philippians 2:3-4) There are at least 63 verses in the Bible about putting others before ourselves. At this moment in time, parking lot worship is the right thing to do. What can you do to help? Think of others and wear your mask and practice social distancing.

Throughout this pandemic God has shown us signs that he is still the loving and all-powerful God that he has been since time began. The week of Christmas Eve the Christmas Star will be visible in the sky. This is a rare occurrence. Coincidence? Or God! If we were sitting in church on Christmas Eve, we might not even have noticed. Maybe it is a sign from God and we will be right where he wants us to be on Christmas Eve.

BELL PRACTICE: Mondays, 7:00 PM in the Sunday School wing.

GRIEFSHARE: Details for a new session of GriefShare will be announced in January 2021.

UCC PENSION FUND OFFERING (Benefits Retired Clergy). **Offering**

Dates: Sunday, December 20 and the Christmas Eve Worship Services. We are able to express our love and compassion for retired UCC Clergy through this offering. These are individuals who have faithfully served their congregations and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. This assistance will benefit those who need help with health insurance premiums, and emergency financial or household needs. Thank you for your contributions.

PRAYER REQUESTS: Please send your prayer requests directly to Pastor Scott either by text (717-880-6082) or e-mail (pastor@stdavidsucc.com or pscott8283@comcast.net) prior to Sunday, so that he can lift them up during worship.

YOUR WEEKLY OFFERINGS: If you would like to mail your offerings to the church, please mail them to Harley Hartman, 2195 Blackrock Rd, Hanover, PA 17331 and include one offering envelope indicating the manner in which you would like to have your funds applied. Thank you for your continued support of the ministries of St. David's!

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS !!

Even though this has been a tough year, we have been able to lovingly share with others. Our congregation is amazing! Thank you for your outpouring of God's love by contributions to these recent offerings.

Caring for Our Own \$1,002.00

Homewood Auxiliary Membership: 28 Members, \$96.00

Collected over 30 tissue boxes as well as lotion and Christmas cards.

Neighbors-in-Need: \$60.00

Blanket Sunday, CWS: \$545.00 Feed-a-Friend Marathon: \$317.00

New Hope Christmas Blessings Gifts: Toaster Ovens (4), Ironing Board (1), George Foreman Grill (2), Crockpot (2), Electric Skillet (1), Electric Hand Mixer (1), Toaster (1), Ladies Totes (2), Football (1), Nerf Football (1), Soccer Ball (1), Board Games (6), Card Games (2), Nail Polish & Dryer (1)

HANOVER AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (HACC)

HACC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

PAL — Packing, Serving, If Anyone Would Like to Volunteer For Christmas Day, a Few More Individuals are Needed to Work in the Kitchen.

Changing Lives Shelter — AM And PM Shifts

Meals On Wheels — Runners And Drivers

Front Desk — Tues, Thurs, and Fri Reception Help.

Cleaning— Wednesdays

HACC ITEMS NEEDED:

PAL: Sauerkraut, Large Cans of Green Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Pasta Sauces, Single-serve Fruits, Canned Pears, Scalloped Potatoes Boxes, Corn Bread Mix, Beef and Chicken Broth, Ziploc Sandwich Baggies

Changing Lives Shelter: Large Trash Bag, Paper Towels, Toilet Paper, Disinfectant Wipes/Spray, Umbrellas or Ponchos

HACC General (Benefits All Ministries): Lysol Spray/ Disinfecting Spray

Meals on Wheels: Prayer Cards/ Words of Encouragement for Our Shut-Ins, Large Print Word Find or Crossword Activity Books, (Old Extra-Large Print Devotion Books. We Currently Have 10 Books and Need 30 More to Reach All of Our Shut-ins.

Clothing Bank: Family-Sized Toiletries, Sheet Sets (all sizes), Bath Towels, Men's White T-shirts (L & XL), Baby Diapers (Size 4-5). (Note: Many good quality clothing items are available. Both clients and anyone in the public are welcome to setup an appointment to select clothing. You will be given *Two Free Bags* of clothing. After that, each item is \$.50. Call 717-633-6353 for an appointment. Open Mon-Thurs 9 am- Noon. Masks required, temperature check, and sanitize hands.)

Ruth's Harvest: Single-serve Entrees, Cereal, Juice Boxes, Snack or Veggies (all single-serve).

COMMUNITY AID UPDATE: Community Aid will be removing the bins from our church property. They are currently accepting donations of *clothing, shoes, toys, books* and *jewelry* at the store on Baltimore St. Just mention St. David's United Church of Christ and our **Code number, #20003** and we

will receive \$.06 per pound for clothing donations. Drive-up hours are Monday – Saturday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

NEW HOPE MINISTRIES: What an amazing November! Our loving and supportive church community was there to support the families we serve so that no one would be hungry on Thanksgiving. Because of the food drives, and funds donated, thousands of families received turkeys and all the trimmings. Volunteers and staff served with big smiles under their face masks to bless our guests. Thank you for helping make these loving moments possible for our neighbors in need! We are blessed by your loving support of our programs!! We wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and prayers for a blessed new year.