



Church of the Hills
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Second Sunday of Advent

“Christmas’ Past – preparing the way”

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 3:1-6

Reverend Bill Sanders

December 5, 2021

We are a vibrant family of faith rooted in God’s Word, gathering together to worship and equipped to share the love of Christ in the world.

****Lift Up Your Eyes – Advent Wreath – The Light of Peace**

**Chorus: Lift up your eyes and see the light surround you;
with radiant hope, illuminate the night.**

Lift up your voice and sing, let earth and heaven ring.

Lift up your eyes and see the everlasting light.

Leader: During Advent, God's light illuminates a weary world. For any who have grown weary of waiting:

People: God speaks, "Peace, be still."

Leader: For any who are anxious about the worries of tomorrow:

People: God speaks, "Peace, be still."

Leader: For any whose lips have been silenced:

People: God speaks, "Peace, be still."

Candle Lighting

Linda and Larry LaGrange

**Chorus: Lift up your eyes and see the light surround you;
with radiant hope, illuminate the night.**

Lift up your voice and sing, let earth and heaven ring.

Lift up your eyes and see the everlasting light.

** Please stand for all hymns if you are able

****Advent Prayer**

In Unison

Gracious Lord, our souls long for the peace that only You can provide. We confess that all too often we only add to the discord, separation, and tension around us. Help us to feel Your peace in our lives, and strive to reflect it more in our witness. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Peace of Christ

Jill Green

Leader: Called to prepare the way of the Lord, we first accept and receive the amazing peace of Christ promised to us. A peace that begins within, and a peace we can reinforce by passing it along to others in preparation of Christ's coming. The peace of Christ be with those gathered here and those watching from home.

People: And, also with you.

Leader: Let us accept and share the peace of Christ with one another with a simple nod and a wave.

****Response to the Peace of Christ "I've Got Peace Like a River"**

Purple Hymnal 623 (v. 1, 3)

I've got peace like a river; I've got peace like a river;
I've got peace like a river, in my soul.

I've got love like an ocean; I've got love like an ocean;
I've got love like an ocean, in my soul.

Prayer for Illumination

Jill Green

Leader: Please join me in the Prayer for Illumination.

All: Holy, holy, holy God, just as Your word came to John in the wilderness, send it once again to us now in this place. Speak to us Your gospel message so that we may cry out with the good news once more. We love You, Lord. Amen.

** Please stand for all hymns if you are able

Hebrew Scripture

Malachi 3:1-4

Jill Green

See, I am sending My messenger to prepare the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But, who can endure the day of His coming, and who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:1-6

Jill Green

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Ministry of Music

“Christmas Communion”

Sung by Chancel Choir

Come, Faithful one and all this Christmastide.
Come to the banquet hall, enter inside.
This is the feast of love Christ has prepared.
Holy communion with us is shared.
Celebrate his coming, meditate the cost.
Look beyond the cradle and behold the cross.
Drink the cup of joy, eat the bread of life.
Taste and see the beauty of God clothed in human flesh,
Immanuel, from heav’n descended with us to dwell.
Once clothed in mystery, hidden, concealed,
Truth in a manger now is revealed.
Celebrate his coming, meditate the cost.
Look beyond the cradle and behold the cross.
Drink the cup of joy, eat the bread of life.
Taste and see the beauty of this holy night.
Taste and see the beauty of this holy, holy night.

Sermon

“Christmas’ Past-preparing the way”

Reverend Bill Sanders

**** Response to Sermon**

“Faith Begins by Letting Go”

Purple Hymnal 684

Faith begins by letting go, giving up what had seemed sure,
taking risks and pressing on, though the way feels less secure:
pilgrimage both right and odd, trusting all our life to God.

Faith endures by holding on, keeping memory’s roots alive
so that hope may bear its fruit; promise-fed, our souls will thrive,
not through merit we possess but by God’s great faithfulness.

Faith matures by reaching out, stretching minds, enlarging hearts,
sharing struggles, living prayer, binding up the broken parts;
till we find the commonplace ripe with witness to God’s grace.

Invitation to the Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Reverend Bill Sanders

****Doxology**

“ Creator of the Stars of Night”

Purple Hymnal 84 (v. 3,4)

At Your great name, O Jesus, now all knees must bend,
all hearts must bow: all things on earth with one accord,
like those in heaven, shall call You Lord.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit,
Three in One, praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.
Amen.

** Please stand for all hymns if you are able

The Eucharist

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Reverend Bill Sanders

Prayers of the People, Prayer of Thanksgiving and 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 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.

Words of Institution

Communion Music

Yuan Li

Distribution of the Elements

You are invited to come forward. Please remain six feet apart from the person in front of you. Please take the individual cups and return to your seats. You are welcome to take the elements anytime while in your seat. After the service, we ask that you please take your cups and throw them away in the trash can located in the Narthex.

For Reflection and Meditation:

The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.

The blood of Christ, shed for you. Amen

Prayer after Thanksgiving

In Unison

All: Because You give us breath, we praise You. Because You feed us with life-giving bread, we give You all thanks. May our sharing revive us that we might shine Your light in the world, and be revived to give and receive, to make mistakes and start again, to forgive and accept forgiveness. God of light, You lead us to the manger, You raise us with You in resurrection, You are light of the world. Shine now in our lives, that we might reflect Your light, Your love, Your hope in the world. Amen.

****Closing Hymn**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Purple Hymnal 88 (v. 1, 2)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

(Refrain)

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who ordererest all things mightily:
to us the path of knowledge show; and teach us in her ways to go.

(Refrain)

****Charge and Congregational Blessing**

Reverend Bill Sanders

Cry out in the wilderness, cry out in our world:
“Prepare the way of the Lord, . . . all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Go into the world with faith, trusting God to lead you.
Go into the world with hope, see God’s presence everywhere.
Go into the world with love, loving those who Christ loves.
Go in faith and go in hope and go out in love.

Janet Sanders

Leader: And the people of God say

People: Alleluia. Amen.

** Please stand for all hymns if you are able

Biography of Today's Guest Minister, Bill Sanders

Rev. Bill Sanders is now “honorably retired”. Having served primarily as an intentional interim during most of his active ministry – including his ‘swan song’ as Arvada’s transitional pastor. He is a native of Colorado, who returned to the state after spending nearly three decades studying and serving in Louisville, Kentucky.

Rev. Sanders after serving two terms on Denver Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry continues to serve as the chair of the COM’s Pastoral Care Team.

Bill spends much free time enjoying walking and hiking. He loves spending as much time as possible with his two sons, their wives, and his four grandchildren, and gives thanks that during the past year of isolation and the distance, that technology has allowed for virtual playdates. Also, that the hidden blessings have included extra time to read -- including books that have been hovering on the shelves for years awaiting such a time as this.



A special thank you to Christi Todd, Neil Snyder, Tate Allbritton, and Kaitlin Lundstrom for helping with the tech.

*Hymnals are indicated for those that may have them at home.

Blue - “The Presbyterian Hymnal”

Red - “Songs for Praise and Worship”

Purple - “Glory to God”

Yellow - “Hymns for the Family of God”

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