

**PROVIDENCE FORGE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
First Sunday after Christmas Day
December 27, 2020**

READING AND LIGHTING OF CANDLE

Leigh Quick

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 148)

Leader: Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens;

People: Praise God in the heights! Praise the Lord, all angels;

Leader: Praise God, all God's host! Praise God, sun and moon; Praise God, all you shining stars!

All: Praise God, you highest heavens, And you waters above the heavens!

SONG OF PRAISE #40 Joy to the World!

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let us our songs employ
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3 No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders
of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Merciful God, we confess our complicity in the divisions that have wounded our country and our world. We have been silent when others are disparaged or held in contempt. Indeed, we ourselves have harbored ill will in our hearts. Forgive and restore in us your Spirit of compassion and justice-seeking love.

Silence is kept.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

FOR CHILDREN Luke 2: 28 (Easy to Read Version)

Simeon took the baby in his arms and thanked God.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:22-40

22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), 24 and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 29 "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." 33 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." 36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. 39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

ANTHEM

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

SERMON

Rev. Nancy Coleman

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Loving God, in this season of celebration, we remember all for whom hardship has robbed joy. We remember especially the children in our church family, in our community and around the globe. We lift before you children who are separated from their parents, who are without a family or who grieve the death of a parent during this season Help us to be ever attentive to the needs and tender sufferings of children in our midst. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Help us to be your witnesses in word and deed in our communities.

Empower us to break down barriers that divide your human family — to resist and disarm stereotypes that malign, to stand in solidarity with outcasts and to hold our civic leaders accountable for our common life and for support of the most vulnerable in our midst. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the nations, we pray for elected officials of this country and countries around our globe. Help them resist greed, prideful ambition and partisan gain in order that they may serve the welfare of all. Inspire them to strive for peace and justice so that all your children may dwell secure, free of war and injustice. Move them to hear the cries of the poor and hungry, and to ensure a rightful share of the resources needed to sustain life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

And as we continue to grapple with overwhelming pandemic challenges, we pray that you would grant special measures of strength and endurance to weary healthcare workers who labor on the front lines of this struggle and to all who are now facilitating vaccinations. We pray for your comfort for all who are sick and for all who have lost loved ones. Grant us all wisdom and courage for the living of this hour. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying...

LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

Opportunities are Easytithe <https://app.easytithe.com/App/Giving/pfpc>
C&F Bank for PFPC and mail to P.O. Box 239

**5¢ a Meal can be offered both using Easy Tithe or a separate check sent to the church.*

SONG OF RESPONSE #57 The First Nowell

1 The first Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep. *Refrain:*

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. *[Refrain]*

3 And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far; to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. *[Refrain]*

4 This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest; and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. *[Refrain]*

5 Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee, and offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense. *[Refrain]*

6 Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord, that hath made heaven and earth of nought, and with his blood our life hath bought. *[Refrain]*

BENEDICTION

Let us greatly rejoice in the Lord with our whole being, for God has clothed us with the garments of salvation and the robe of justice. Let us lift up the brokenhearted and stand with the oppressed. Let us love God with our whole life and love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

People: Peace be with you!

Liturgy by Roger Gench, Presbyterian Outlook