
A Glance at the Week

Monday

7:00 am Men's Discussion (*Zoom*)

6:30 pm Small Group

Church Contact Information

Office Phone: 651-698-3889

Office Hours: Thurs & Fri 1:00-6:00 p.m.

Office Admin (secretary@randolphheights.org)

Session (session@randolphheights.org)

For Pastoral Communication, please call Pastor Ken @ 651-592-3320

Or Email @ ken.highley@randolphheights.org

Looking Ahead

Advent Series-

A Son *Luke 1:26-38*

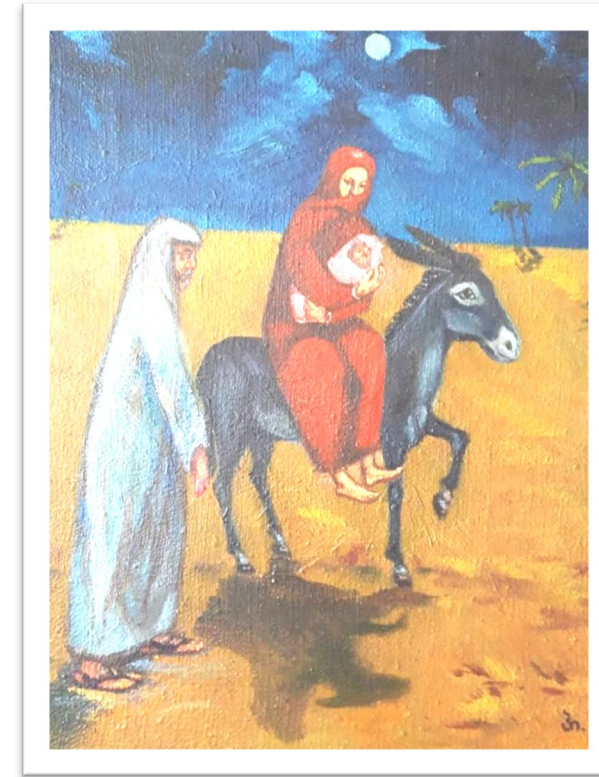
A Song *Luke 1:39-55*

War *Matthew 2:13-23*

& Peace *Luke 2:10-14*

Upcoming ~

Epistle of James



Randolph Heights Presbyterian Church

435 Hamline Ave. South
Saint Paul, MN 55105

December 17, 2023

9:30am Discussion

10:30am Worship

www.randolphheights.org

We are glad you're here!

This is a community which strives to worship and serve God together. Within this community, people freely explore their personal questions about God and the Bible. It's together that we can better learn the breadth and depth of the Gospel and how it works out in our lives. Then, through the grace and hope of the gospel, we serve those in need and work together towards a thriving community.

This program is organized under five headings as described below:

Gathering: We remember God of Creation. The creator is amazing, perfect, powerful, good and is worthy of our worship and praise. This helps center and prepare our hearts for a time of worship.

Confession and Renewal reminds us that this world is not as God originally intended it. We express our grief and sorrow over the brokenness of this world and of our own lives. Our need for grace never goes away, and it is only by faith in Jesus that we can be made right with God. Within these words of renewal we recognize the truth that God's redemption of his people has been accomplished in Jesus.

Thanksgiving is our response to the redemptive plan of God. It is also an opportunity to express our thanks tangibly.

Ministry of the Word is expressed through reading our scripture passage for the day, listening to the Word preached, and responding with words of prayer from the congregation.

The **Benediction** is a good word to be sent out on.

We encourage you to spend some time before the service begins and note how it flows. You are also encouraged to take this bulletin with you to use for personal devotional time throughout the week.

Scripture Reading Matthew 2:13-23

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

"A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

L This is the Word of the Lord.
A Thanks be to God!

BENEDICTION

- L God has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
~ from *Micah 6:8, NIV*

**Life in the Body*

Send Out

- L Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. – *Romans 15:12-13, NRSV*

A Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus Christ, there is nothing I can do that would make you love me more, and nothing I have done that makes you love me less. Your presence and approval are all I need for everlasting joy. As you have been to me, so I will be to others. As I pray, I'll measure your compassion by the cross and your power by the resurrection. Amen.

Reflections

If you have a beautiful story, it has to have conflict. If you don't have conflict, it can't be a good story.
~ *Donald Miller, 1971- , Author*

No one who ever met Jesus Christ ever responded moderately to him. The only three things you see people doing when they meet the real Jesus are to run away from him in terror, assault him with fury, or prostrate themselves in utter surrender.
~ John Stott, 1921-2011, Priest/Theologian, Author: Basic Christianity

If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead. ~ *William Law, 1686-1761, Church of England*

If we live in a denial of the realities of our need and we persist in this, we run the risk of existing in this forever. We will move towards something that's like an asylum. Those in hell are diminished by the fact that they have denied the reality of themselves and the grace of God as well. ~ *Dr. Jerry Root, Professor Emeritus, Wheaton College*

A revolution is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle between the future and the past. ~ *Fidel Castro*

Jesus died for our sins not so that we could sort out abstract ideas, but so that we, having been put right, could become part of God's plan to put his whole world right. That is how the revolution works. ~ *N.T. Wright, The Day the Revolution Began*

I protect myself by refusing to know myself. ~ *Florian Martins, 1957- , Essayist*

I'm convinced that most men don't know what they believe, rather, they only know what they wish to believe. How many people blame God for man's atrocities, but wouldn't dream of imprisoning a mother for her son's crime?
~ *Criss Jami, 1987- , Author: Killosophy*

PRELUDE

Micah 6:6 – With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?

L O God, you pour out the Spirit of grace and love. Deliver us from cold hearts and wandering thoughts,

A *May we, with steady minds and burning zeal, worship you in spirit and truth. Amen.*



Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy
Come to earth to taste our sad - ness, He whose glo - ries
Born Thy peo - ple to de - li - ver, Born a child and



peo - ple free; From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our
knew no end; By His life He brings us glad - ness, Our Re - deem - er,
yet a King, Born to reign in us for - e - ver, Now Thy gra - cious



rest in Thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion,
Shep - herd, Friend. Leav - ing rich - es with - out num - ber,
king - dom bring. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit



Hope of all the earth Thou art, Dear De - sire of
Born with - in a cat - tle stall; This the ev - er -
Rule in all our hearts a - lone; By Thine all - suf -



e - 'vry na - tion, Joy of e - 'vry long - ing heart.
- last - ing won - der, Christ was born the Lord of all.
- fi - cient me - rit, Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Pastoral Prayer

L “There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.”

~ C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

Open Petition

After each petition the Leader will say:

L Lord in your mercy

A *Hear our prayer. (Response from Congregation)*

~or~

L *Let us Give God Thanks*

A *We give You thanks O Lord.*

L Strengthen us, O God, in the power of your Spirit, to loose the chains that bind and claim your blessing for all people. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. In Christ and in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God. Amen.

The Lord's Table *(Offered 1st Sunday of Month)*

Invitation to the Table

L Professing & baptized members of a church in which Jesus Christ is professed as Lord and Savior: the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him and trust in him alone for their salvation. All who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him, are now invited to come with gladness to the table of the Lord.

A *We receive this food gladly, believing, as we eat, that Jesus is our lifegiving food and drink and that he will come again to call us to the wedding feast of the Lamb.*

L Let us give thanks together:

Prayer of Thanks *(from a fourth-century liturgy from the city of Alexandria.)*

A *It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks, for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and forever. Fountain of all life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance. Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day, and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we glorify your name and lift our voices in joyful praise:*

*All Sing: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Power and Might,
Heaven and Earth are filled with Your Glory. (2x)
Hosanna! Hosanna! In the highest! (2x)*

Words of institution

L The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Cor 11:23-26, NIV

Distribution of the Elements

Advent Candle Lighting

L We relight the first two candles of the Advent wreath. The candle of HOPE and the candle of PEACE. Now we light the third candle of Advent. This is the candle of JOY. As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of his birth. From the Book of Isaiah we read the words of our Lord:

A *"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight." – Isaiah 65:18*

L From the words of Paul to the people of the church at Galatia:

A *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit." – Galatians 5:22-25*

L Let us join together with these words:

A *We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for the fulfillment of your promise of a Savior and what that means in our lives. Thank you for the gift of salvation through the birth of your son, Jesus. Create us anew as we wait, and help us to see your glory as you fill our lives with your living Spirit. Amen.*

Prayer of Adoration (followed by Lord's Prayer)

L Lord God Almighty, King of glory and love eternal, you are worthy at all times to receive adoration, praise, and blessing; we praise you now for sending your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, for whom our hearts wait, and to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, be honor and dominion, now and for ever. Amen.

Hear us now as we prayer together, the words you taught your disciples:

A *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*

In the Bleak Mid Winter

Gustav Holst

Christina Rossetti



- In the bleak mid-win-ter, fros-ty wind made moan,
Our God, hea-ven can't hold him, nor - earth sus-tain;
- An-gels and arch-an-gels may have gath-ered there,
- What-can I give him, poor-as I am?



earth stood hard as i-ron, wa-ter like a stone;
heav'n and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign.
cher-u-bim and ser-a-phim thro-inged the air;
If I were a shep-herd, I would bring a lamb;



snow had fa-llen, snow on snow-, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-win-ter a sta-ble place su-fficed the
but his mo-ther on-ly-, in her mai-den bliss,
if I were a Wise-Man-, I would do my part; yet



in the bleak mid-win-ter, long a-go.
Lord-God Al-might-y, Je-sus Christ.
wor-shipped the be-lov-ed with-a kiss.
what-can I give him: give-my heart.

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

Timothy Matthews

E.S. Elliot



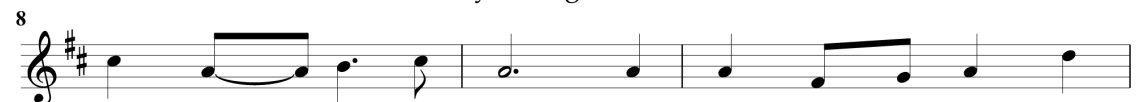
Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy
Hea-ven's ar-ches rang when the
Thou-camest, O Lord, with the
When the hea-vens shall ring, and the



king-ly crown, When Thou camest to earth for me; But in
an-gels sang, Pro-claim-ing Thy ro-yal de-gree; But in
liv-ing Word, That should set Thy-peo-ple free; But with
an-gels sing, At Thy com-ing to vic-tor-y, Let Thy



Beth-le hem's home was there found no room For Thy
low-ly birth Thou didst come to earth, And in
mock-ing scorn and with crown of thorn, They-
voice call me home, say-ing "Yet there is room, There is



ho-ly na-tiv-i-ty. O come to my heart, Lord
great hu-mil-i-ty. O come to my heart, Lord
bore Thee to Cal-var-y. O come to my heart, Lord
room at My side for thee." My heart shall re-joice, Lord



Je-sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.
Je-sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.
Je-sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.
Je-sus, When Thou com-est and call est for me.

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Preparation

- L Make us to know your ways, O LORD; teach us your paths. Lead us in your truth, and teach us, for you are the God of our salvation; for you we wait all day long. Amen. –from Psalm 25:4-5, NRSV

Scripture Matthew 2:13-23 (found on Page 15)

Series Advent 2023

Sermon Christmas War

Profession of Faith

- A *In love you came to a stable in Bethlehem to become one with us.
In love you walked the plains and hills of Galilee and Judea
to teach us how to live.
In love you were nailed on a cross on Calvary to bear away our sin.
In love you rose from a tomb in Joseph's garden to defeat death's power over us.
In love you ascended beyond the clouds to be our reigning Lord.
You came to love us so that we need never feel unloved,
deserted, alone, condemned*

*Our only hope is Jesus Christ.
After we refused to live in the image of God,
he was born of the virgin Mary,
sharing our genes and our instincts,
entering our culture, speaking our language,
fulfilling the law of God.*

*Being united to Christ's humanity,
we know ourselves when we rest in him.
Come, Lord Jesus: We are open to your Spirit.
We await your full presence.
Our world finds rest in you alone.*

CONFESSION & RENEWAL

- L In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!
–Isaiah 30:15, 18, NIV

CONFESSION & RENEWAL

- A *Lord, we have not kept watch for you. We have occupied ourselves with our own concerns. We have not waited to find your will for us. We have not noticed the needs of the people around us. We have not acknowledged the love that has been shown to us. Forgive us for our lack of watchfulness. Help us to wait to know your will. Help us to look out for the needs of others. Help us to work and watch for your coming. Amen.*

Silent and Personal Confession

Creator of the Stars of Night

Alex Mejias

JM Neale (trans.)



Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -
In sor - row that the an - cient curse should doom to death a
When this old world drew on toward night You came, but not in
At your great name, ma - jes - tic now, all knees must bend, all



- last - ing light, O Christ, Re - deem - er of us all, we pray you,
u - ni - verse, you came to save a ru - ined race with heal - ing
splen - dor bright Not as a mon - arch, but the child Of Ma - ry
hearts must bow; all things on earth with one ac - cord join those in



hear us when we call.
gifts of heav'n - ly grace. (2)Come, oh come,
vir - gin mo - ther mild
heav'n to call you Lord. (4)Come, oh come,



Come, oh come, Come, oh come, to us.
Come, oh come, Come, oh come, to us.

RENEWAL

L The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness." People of God: Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose coming we announce in this season, is our righteousness. In Christ, we are made right with God.

— based on Jeremiah 33:14-16, NRSV

A *Thanks be to God!*

Doxology

L What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man, I would do my part. Yet what I can, I give him, give him my heart.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him, all creatures here below.

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

A *God of hope,
you gave your Son to free a lost world.
You give your Spirit to comfort and encourage.
You give us hope for a future free of pain, sorrow, and tears.
You promise us a future with you.
In gratitude, we bring you our time, talents, and tithes.
May our gifts be used so that many others will taste and see
the goodness of knowing you.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.*