

MUMC At-Home Worship: November 29, 2020

It's here, Advent is finally here! After a long year in every way we could possibly measure it, I'm looking forward to the healing balm that the Advent and Christmas seasons provide. For the next few weeks leading up to Christmas, we'll be exploring the story of Jesus' birth with particular emphasis on the moments when the angels show up and say, "Fear not!" Advent is traditionally a time of preparation and specifically a reminder that we can have confidence in the hope that Christ who came once to earth will come again – and so we can live fearlessly no matter the state of the world around us. Thanks for worshipping with us this Advent!

-Pastor Dillon

If available, place a candle in the center of your gathering space and light it with this prayer:

Almighty God, calm our spirits and prepare our hearts for the celebration of your birth this year. Remove our fear, we pray, and replace it with hope. In Christ's name, Amen.

Hymn: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed*, United Methodist Hymnal #203 [watch/listen here](#)

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:5-25

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Reflect:

1. Zechariah is "startled and overcome with fear" when the angel first approaches him, and his fear doesn't seem to dissipate when he hears the angel's news. How do you think you might feel if you were in Zechariah's position? Have you ever found yourself in a similar place throughout your life?
2. Zechariah questions whether he and his wife can have a child because of their age but the angel insists that what God has spoken will come true. What are some other factors that we hold on to, limiting our ability to imagine what God can do with us?
3. As the angel says, this child to be born will grow up to be John the Baptist who prepares the way for Jesus. What might it look like for us to prepare ourselves for Jesus over this season of Advent? How might we put our trust in what God is doing in and through us?

Hymn: *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*, United Methodist Hymnal #218 [watch/listen here](#)

Prayer Requests: Share prayer requests and have a moment of silent prayer

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: *Joy to the World*, United Methodist Hymnal #246 [watch/listen here](#)

Closing Prayer: Coming Christ, we offer ourselves to your hands, trusting in the possibilities we cannot even begin to imagine. Restore to us the imagination of hope, that we might glimpse the world that you are creating around us and become messengers of this good news. Amen.

(Blow out the candle)

Hail to the Lord's Anointed
United Methodist Hymnal #203

1. Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break
oppression, to set the
captive free; to take
away transgression,
and rule in equity.
2. He comes with succor speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for
sighing, their darkness
turn to light, whose souls,
condemned and dying,
are precious in his sight.
3. He shall come down like
showers upon the fruitful
earth; love, joy, and hope,
like flowers, spring in
his path to birth.
Before him, on the
mountains, shall peace,
the herald, go, and
righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.
4. To him shall prayer
unceasing and daily
vows ascend; his kingdom
still increasing,
a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall
never his covenant
remove; his name shall
stand forever; that
name to us is love.

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed" words are by James Montgomery, 1821 and are in the public domain.

Luke 1:5-25 Common English Bible

During the rule of King Herod of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observance of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant and they both were very old. One day Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. All the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son and you must name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the Lord's eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God. He will go forth before the Lord, equipped with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and he will turn the disobedient to righteous patterns of thinking. He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are very old."

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time. But because you didn't believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered why he was in the sanctuary for such a long time. When he came out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he gestured to them and couldn't speak. When he completed the days of his priestly service, he returned home. Afterward, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She kept to herself for five months, saying, "This is the Lord's doing. He has shown his favor to me by removing my disgrace among other people."

What Child Is This

United Methodist Hymnal #219

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Chorus:

This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

2. Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. [Chorus]
3. So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him. [Chorus]

“What Child Is This” words are by William C. Dix, 1865, music is a 16th century English melody, and are in the public domain.

Joy to the World

United Methodist Hymnal #246

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 all their 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 sin and sorrow 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.

“Joy to the World” words are by Issac Watts, 1719, music is arr. from G.F. Handel, 1741, by Lowell Mason, 1848, and are in the public domain.