**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**Second Sunday After Christmas**

**January 3, 2021**



*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.” (John 1:1-4)*

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*The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.*

**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son

**P: And they will call him Immanuel-which means “God with us”**

L: You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain

**P: You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice**

L: Lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the whole world

**P: “Here is your God!”**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You” #174 (vv.1-2)

**Joyful joyful we adore You**

**God of glory Lord of light**

**Angels lifting praise before You**

**Sing throughout this holy night**

**In a manger lies a baby**

**Child of Mary Son of God**

**Voices joined in joyful chorus**

**Praise You for Your gift of love**

**All Your works declare Your glory**

**All creation joins to sing**

**Praise resounds as earth rejoices**

**In the birth of Christ the King**

**Shepherds kneel before the Infant**

**Trumpets sound and anthems raise**

**As with joy our hearts are lifted**

**Joined in wonder love and praise**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: God light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy, and gave us power to be your children. Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us, so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness and walk in the way of peace. Gather into your arms all the peoples of the world, as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father​**

**And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.**

**As it was in the beginning​**

**Is now and ever shall be**

**World without end**

**Amen. Amen**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Jeremiah 31:7-14

 For thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, “Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.”

 See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.

 Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

**Prayer of Confession**

L: We’ve seen the glory of God and light of the world, but our lives get overwhelmed regularly. We can forget our mission as we get involved with our daily tasks. For the times we get scattered, let us surrender…

**P: God who was, who is, and who is to come, in You is life and your life is the light of all people. You call us to be light in the darkness as you were light in the darkness. Help us to accept You, even when your own people did not. Remind us to praise and glorify you, even as our world becomes more skeptical. Draw us to your majesty as others encourage us to live for ourselves. Teach us to love our enemies though the world tells us to speak poorly about and ignore our neighbors. May we be full of grace and truth. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 147

**P:** **Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For God strengthens the bars of your gates; God blesses your children within you. God grants peace within your borders; God fills you with the finest of wheat.** **God sends out his command to the earth; God’s word runs swiftly. God gives snow like wool; God scatters frost like ashes. God hurls down hail like crumbs-- who can stand before God’s cold? God sends out God’s word, and melts them; God makes God’s wind blow, and the waters flow. He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances. Praise the LORD!**

**Hymn of Affirmation:** “Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart” #298 (v.1)

**Spirit of God, who dwells within my heart**

**Wean it from sin, through all its pulses move**

**Stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are**

**And make me love you as I ought to love**

**Second Scripture Lesson:** Ephesians 1:3-14

 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

 In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

 In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson**: John 1:1-18

 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’”)

 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**\*Hymn of Response:** “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee” #552 (v.1,4)

**O Master, let me walk with thee**

**In lowly paths of service free**

**Tell me thy secret, help me bear**

**The strain of toil, the fret of care**

**In hope that sends a shining ray**

**Far down the future's broad'ning way**

**In peace that only thou canst give**

**With thee, O Master, let me live**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:God has blessed creation with a great variety of gifts and gathered all people into one family. In sharing, we strengthen and are strengthened by one another. Give, remembering this society and the world, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**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**

**\*Hymn**: “It Came upon the Midnight Clear” #168 (v.4)

**For, lo, the days are hast’ning on**

**By prophet bards foretold**

**When with the ever-circling years**

**Comes round the age of gold**

**When peace shall over all the earth**

**Its ancient splendor fling**

**And the whole world give back the song**

**Which now the angels sing**

**\*Benediction**

L: You have redeemed through Jesus Christ, the first-born of all creation. And you have been given every spiritual blessing. Live as God’s adopted children, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.