



*"An inclusive community, celebrating God's unconditional love
through engaging worship and faithful service"*



December 19, 2021
4th Sunday of Advent

"Love: With Mary, Will We Live to Love?"



The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

You are invited to greet those around you or sit quietly.

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude

“A Child is Born”

Zacar

Words of Welcome

Pastor Clare Gromoll

*****Opening Hymn**

“Canticle of the Turning”

see page 3

*****Advent Candle Lighting**

Eleanora Favilla & Kathy Iverson

One: Advent is a season of waiting and watching for God’s presence with us. Today we light the first candle of HOPE, the second candle of PEACE, the third candle of JOY, and the fourth candle of LOVE. As we seek to fulfill our congregation’s purpose, we are wondering, longing, and expecting the new life that God is bringing forth among us.

All: We welcome this new life that embraces all beings with hope, peace, joy, and love!

*****Advent Candle Song**

“In the Darkness, Light a Light”

German carol

words by Judith Melander



In the dark - ness, light a light; Ad - vent can - dle, warm and bright; Fire of love in

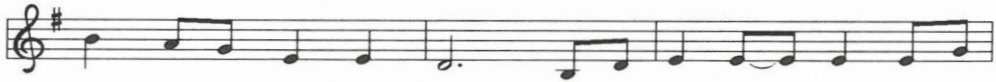


dark of night. Em - man - u - el! We wait for you, O Je - sus.

Canticle of the Turning



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . . age to age, we re -



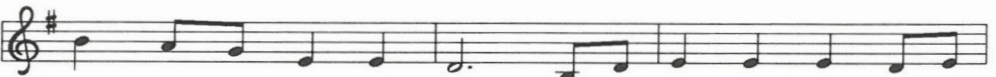
God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



Refrain
 My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

*****Prayer of Longing**

God of all, in this season of watchful preparation, we are thankful. For the joy we hear raised in song, praising the story of Jesus' birth. For the peace of quiet moments, when we feel embraced by your stillness. For the love you have given us; and for the love shown when you told Mary that she need not be afraid, even in the midst of a most terrifying thing. For Christ himself; thank you for sending him to spread a message of forgiveness and acceptance to all people. We praise your name, which is Love. Amen.

prayerful silence

*****Assurance of Grace & Invitation to Pass the Peace**

We safely share a sign of peace with those nearest to us

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you! **All:** **And also with you!**

Proclaiming God's Love

A Time with Young People

Pastor Clare invites children forward to the front row of pews

Blessing One Another

Seated, the congregation opens their arms to the children

Children : God be with you

All: **And also with you**

Children may follow leaders to Children's Activity or remain in worship

Families are also welcome (if needing to move around more) to listen to the service from the play area in the Narthex or via the baby monitor in the Nursery downstairs

Duet

“The Annunciation” & “The Magnificat”

*from Holden Evening
Prayer*

by Marty Haugen

Sung by Cheri Schwartz & Michael Bjork

An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth
to a woman whose name was Mary
The angel said to her,

“Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you.

You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus,
the Chosen One of God most high.”

And Mary said, “I am a servant of my God, I live to do your will.”

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you,
You have looked with love on your servant here,
and blessed me all my life through.
Great and mighty are you, O Holy One,
strong is your kindness evermore.
How you favor the weak and lowly one,
humbling the proud of heart.

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones,
and uplifted the humble of heart,
you have filled the hungry with wondrous things,
and left the wealthy no part.
Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One,
strong is your justice, strong your love,
As you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you,
You have looked with love on your servant here,
and blessed me all my life through.

Scriptures

Psalm 80:1-7, Luke 1:26-55

The Inclusive Bible

Psalm

Shepherd of Israel, hear us, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned on the cherubim, shine out!

Shine out before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh!
Awaken your power and come to save us!

**O God, return to us -- let your face smile on us, and we will
be saved!**

God of Hosts, how much longer will you fume while your people pray?
You fed us on the bread of tears, and made us drink our tears in
Such measure; you now let our neighbors ridicule us and our enemies
treat us with scorn.

**O God, return to us -- let your face smile on us, and we will
be saved!**

Luke

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, "Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!"

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus--'Deliverance.' His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have never been with a man?"

The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God."

Mary said, "I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say." With that, the angel left her.

Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!"

Mary said: "My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.

For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.

For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.

Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you.

You have shown strength with you arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit;

you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places.

You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy—the promise you made to our ancestors—

to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever."

Morning Message

“Love: With Mary, Will We Live To Love?”

Responding To God’s Love

Prayers of the People

You are invited to speak a brief prayer for yourself, another, or a part of the world

One: God, in your love,

All: Hear our prayer

Lord’s Prayer

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

the hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come
on Earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

“Little Drummer Boy”

Simone



*****Sung Response “In the Bleak Midwinter”**

What can I offer, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise one, I would do my part;

but what can I offer: all my heart.

*****Prayer of Dedication**

God of generous love, may these gifts bring light to those who walk in darkness, hope to those who live in despair, and justice to those who are oppressed. Grant to each giver a sense of purposeful participation in the most important opportunity of all time: to share your love with the world. To this end, we dedicate our offerings and ourselves. Amen.

Going Forth to Share God's Love

*****Singing "Happy Birthday"**

..Happy birthday dear Michael, Milan & Peter

*****Closing Hymn "My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise" #106**

*****Benediction**

*****Sung Response "Let There Be Peace on Earth"**

by Jill Jackson-Miller and Sy Miller

**Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me
Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God as creator, family all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.**

Postlude "Go Tell It on the Mountain" *African/American Spiritual*

PRAYER CORNER

Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:

* For **Claire, BJ and Edith Stokes** as they prepare for the birth of a child in June!

*For the joy of **beautiful music** in our worship services, lead by Michael Bjork, Sharon Neuenfeldt and our PCC Choir.

*For **Zack Peterson**, son of former PCC member Joel Peterson and friend of the Dittmanns, who is now recovering at home after hospitalization with Covid.

*For **Jere Fetter**, who continues to manage pain in his upper leg, hoping upcoming physical therapy will help.

*We celebrate Michele Stephan's mother, **Dorothy Miels**, who turned 100 on November 26th!

*For Emily Wulff's "Grandma Dough," **Evelyn Reichert**, nearing the end of her life. For peace and comfort for Evelyn and her family.

*For **Sam Gromoll** as a fractured toe begins to heal after recently tripping and falling at home.

*For Aidan Gromoll's friend Anatasia's mother, **Natalja**, being treated for life-threatening injuries after a car accident in Latvia.

*For **Aidan Gromoll**, who soon begins providing medical care at a welcome center for asylum seekers and refugees in Romania. We long for all global citizens to have access to basic necessities of safety, shelter, food and clean water.

*We celebrate birthdays with Michael Favilla, Milan Horak & Peter Favilla all on the 17th!

cont...

And in the wider community...

*In the wake of the devastating tornadoes this last weekend, may all the individuals, families and communities access the resources and support they need to begin grieving, healing, and rebuilding. (*See the Mid-Week for a link to give through the United Church of Christ's "2021 Severe Storms Appeal Including December Tornadoes"*)

*When we feel fear and hate, may we find sources of grace and love to transform our impulse toward violence.

*In Oxford Michigan, may God's healing love be present with loved ones of the four teenagers murdered by their classmates and the classmates injured by gunfire. May we each become engaged in pushing for safer gun laws.

*We pray for justice in the current trial related to the April killing of Daunte Wright. Grant us the courage to keep pushing ourselves toward antiracist ideas and our nation toward antiracist policies.

*As the pandemic rages on, having killed 5.35 million persons worldwide and with 10.2 million active cases in this land, may we as a congregation continue to protect each other and new friends during this Advent season.

Christmas Solstice & Christmas Eve Services

A Light in the Darkness:
A Contemplative Christmas Solstice Service
Dec. 21, 7 pm | Fellowship 8 pm

Christmas Eve Service | 7 pm
Fellowship 8:15 - 8:45 pm
Christmas Eve Service | 9 pm

Please RSVP for these three worship services!

Seating is limited due to Covid safety protocols.
We will hold several seats for walk-ins visitors.

651-4396-5667 office@peoplescongregational.org

Flyer in Narthex, please share with a friend

Faith Conversations



Faith Conversations

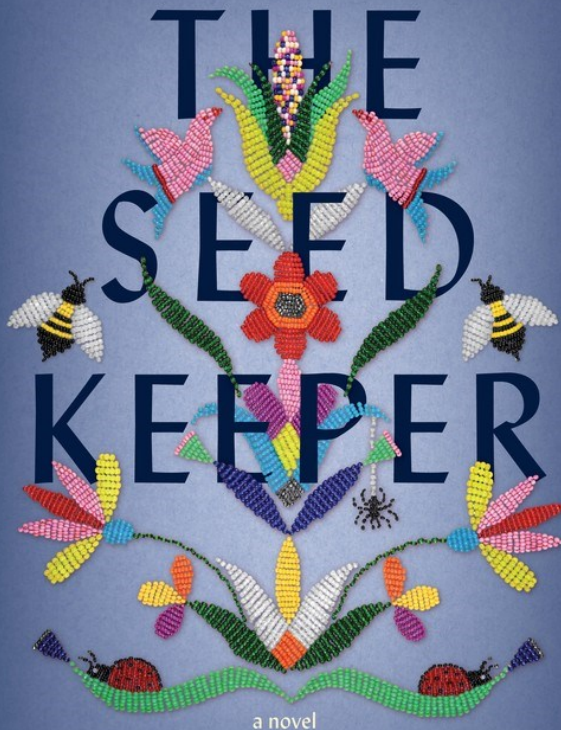
Our adult ed. Forum | in-person and zoomed
Most Sundays, 11-11:45 am

Join us in the Fireside Room. Bring your 10:30 am after-worship fellowship treats with you!

In 10-minute videos, contemporary progressive faith leaders present key concepts of God, religion, Jesus, salvation, cross, Bible, church. We'll explore biblical texts and faith concepts, applying them to our own lives.

Dec. 19 Topic: Cross | "Where God Is"
on break Dec. 26, Jan. 2, resumes Jan. 9

"Compelling . . . *The Seed Keeper* invokes the strength that women, land, and plants have shared with one another through the generations." —ROBIN WALL KIMMERER



DIANE WILSON

PCC Book Club

We aim to read books that matter from diverse genres, topics and authors.

Calling all readers! We will read local Dakota author Diane Wilson's debut novel,
The Seed Keeper, in January.

Hybrid gatherings
(Zoomed & In-person at church)

Jan. 13 & 27, 6:30 – 8 pm

If interested, please contact
Pastor Clare
pastor@peoplescongregational.org
651-600-6409



Leadership Team Members 2022

On Sunday, Dec. 12, we voted to approve our 2022 slate of officers and members at large for our Leadership Team.

***Two new team members' names are bolded**
(each begins a 3-year term).*

Moderator - Rolf Dittmann

Past Moderator - Matt Wulff

Vice Moderator - Paul Spilseth

Clerk - Sue Favilla

Treasurer - Bill Stokes

At large - Lori Mildon, Jane Hanson, **Mary Maren Bjork**, **Carol Dusbabek**

Ex officio - Pastor Clare

We thank these four members for their faithful service
(as they rotate off the Leadership Team at this time):

Mary Binger, Paula Richey, Cheri Schwartz, BJ Stokes

Thank you to all who attended the meeting, either in person or via Zoom.

We reviewed our 2022 Vision Budget (which we will vote to approve during our Annual Meeting of the Congregation on January 30, 2022).

We also voted to shift Pastor Clare from part-time to full-time status as we move forward, supporting vibrant and growing ministries!

(Notes from this meeting will be forwarded to the congregation soon.)

Just a
friendly
reminder...

Updating Our Electronic Giving Withdrawals for 2022



Thank you to all who made intentions to give financially in 2022.
Our "Rooted in Love" campaign was a huge success!

If you need to set up electronic withdrawals for the first time or you need to update the amount regularly withdrawn, please log on to our giving portal to do so.

If already an electronic giver, you may wish to wait until your December gift has been withdrawn at your current giving level.

<https://www.fellowshiponegiving.com/App/Giving/peop309168>

You will find the process quite intuitive. Here are the steps:

1 - Sign in (or create a giving account)

2 - You will see 3 choices: Give Now, Recurring, History.

3a - If a first-time electronic giver, choose "Give Now" to set up your recurring gift.

- OR -

3b - If a returning electronic giver, choose "Recurring." Click on the pencil icon to edit you withdrawal amount (and frequency if you wish) for 2022.

Upcoming Events:

Dec. 21 | A Light in the Darkness: A *Contemplative Christmas Solstice Service*,
7 pm | Fellowship 8:15 pm

Dec. 24 | Christmas Eve Services 7 pm & 9 pm (8:15 pm fellowship)

Jan. 2 | “Milk & Honey” around the firepit @ People’s Park, 9:30 am

Jan. 9 | Guest preacher leads worship, 9:30 am

Jan. 23 | Antiracism Collective Sacred Conversation ~ following worship we
will look at “The Bad & The Good: Racism, Christianity &
The Congregational Church”

Jan. 30 | Annual Meeting of the congregation


*****We have a pressing need for volunteers
for the rest of December.**

**Please contact Kimberly to sign up for any of the 16+ slots not
yet filled. office@peoplescongregational.org
651-439-5667**

Thank you for all who made today wonderful: Music Dir. Michael Bjork, Worship
Accompanist Sharon Neuenfeldt & Cheri Schwartz (beautiful music),
Kathy Iverson (liturgist), Eleanora Favilla (acolyte), Children’s Activity leaders &
assistants, Emily & Evelyn Wulff & Cheri Schwartz (greeters), Lori Mildon
(fellowship host), Jill Greenhalgh (Faith Conversations leader),
Matt Wulff (recorder)



People’s Congregational Church

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