



The Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 22, 2024
Worship – 10:00 AM

Words of Welcome

“It is the mission of the Community Reformed Church of Colonie to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all of our minds; and to love our neighbors as ourselves.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

We are a community bound together and energized by faith, love, and commitment to Jesus Christ. And even though you may not yet share that faith, love, and commitment, you are most welcome to be with us, to belong here, to experience what we’re about. Then, if you are attracted and persuaded by what you see and hear, we hope you’ll want to set down roots here long-term. And even if you don’t, you’ll always be a friend.

The Community Reformed Church of Colonie welcomes you
and thanks you for worshipping with us.

Please join in the worship liturgy by reading the sections in ***bold italics***.

* - Please rise in body or in spirit

FOR CONTEMPLATION

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:1-5

PRELUDE "Lo, How a Rose"

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

THE ELDER'S PRAYER – Linda Murphy

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES - Members of the Family Ministries-
The Williamson Family

In a weary and worn world,
how do we begin again?
Where do we start?

Let us begin with tenderness.

Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.

***Let us begin from a place of vulnerability
and hope.***

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace,
joy, and love.

***May the warmth of these lights be
our cornerstone.***

***May the truth in these lights help us
begin again.***

May it be so! Amen.

INTROIT “The Risen Christ”

CALL TO WORSHIP

In this weary world,
we sing of joy.

In this fragile world,
we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world,
we look for God.

In this tender world,
we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith.

So in this time of worship,
may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.
With hope in our hearts, amen!



* HYMN 145 "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

145 Of the Father's Love Begotten

In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God. Jn. 1:1

Unison

1. Of the Fa-ther's love be-got-ten, ere the worlds be-gan to be,
 2. O that birth for-ev-er bless-ed, when the Vir-gin, full of grace,
 3. O ye heights of heaven, a-dore him, an-gel hosts, his prais-es sing,
 4. Christ, to thee with God the Fa-ther, and, O Ho-ly Ghost, to thee,

he is Al-pha and O-me-ga, he the source, the
 by the Ho-ly Ghost con-ceive-ing, bore the Sav-ior
 powers, do-min-ions, bow be-fore him, and ex-tol our
 hymn and chant and high thanks-giv-ing and un-wea-ried

end-ing he, of the things that are, that have been,
 of our race; and the Babe, the world's Re-deem-er,
 God and King; let no tongue on earth be si-lent,
 prais-es be: hon-our, glo-ry, and do-min-ion,

and that fu-ture years shall see, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 first re-vealed his sa-cred face, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 ev-ery voice in con-cert ring, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 and e-ter-nal vic-to-ry, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!

WORDS: Marcus Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th C.; tr. John M. Neale, 1854,
 and Henry W. Baker, 1859, alt.
 MUSIC: Plainsong, c. 13th C.; arr. based on C. Winfred Douglas, 1916

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM
 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,
a God who fills our nights with stars,
who follows winter with spring,
who dwells with and among us.
We believe that this God has dreams for creation,
dreams of justice like a mighty stream
and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.
Therefore, we push cynicism aside.
We risk vulnerability.
We hold onto hope,
and we declare:
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”*

TAIZÉ MEDITATION “Sing Praises” (3 times)

*Sing praises, all you peoples,
sing praises to the Lord.
Sing praises, all you peoples,
sing praises to the Lord!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God,
You paint pictures of what could be,
but we declare those visions impossible.
You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,
but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.
You dream of a more just day,
but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.
Forgive us for losing sight of hope.
Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.
Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.
*Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
and to not be afraid of either.*
With gratitude we pray, amen.

TAIZE RESPONSE - "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" (Verse 1)

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.*

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE - Sarah Huiest

DEACON'S PRAYER FOR THE WORLD - Marv Helf

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

ANTHEM "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSONS Matthew 1:18-25 – Joseph’s Dream

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

This is the Word of The Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

THE MORNING MESSAGE - “Hope is Worth the Risk”



HYMN 163 "Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming"

163 Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming

I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. S. of S. 2:1

1. Lo! how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in
 3. This Flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the

sprung, of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as saints of old have
 mind; with Ma - ry we be - hold it, the Vir - gin Moth - er
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - ery -

sung. It came, a flow - eret bright, a - mid the cold of
 kind. To show God's love a - right, she bore to us a
 where. True man, yet ver - y God, from sin and death he

win - ter, when half spent was the night.
 Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
 saves us and light - ens ev - ery load.

WORDS: German carol, 16th C.; sts. 1,2, tr. Theodore Baker, 1894, alt.;
 st. 3, tr. Harriet Krauth Spaeth, 1875

MUSIC: *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, 1599; harm. Michael Praetorius, 1609

ES IST EIN' ROS' ENTSPRUNGEN
 Irregular

*BENEDICTION

*THE IRISH BLESSING

*May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be ever at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again, and until we meet again,
May the God who loves us all
Hold you in the palm of His hand.
Amen.*

POSTLUDE “We Adore Thee”

All of the liturgical resources for our Advent and Christmas worship theme, “Words for the Beginning” are used with permission from “A Sanctified Art LLC” and have been adapted from those prepared by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed.

Joseph’s Dream

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 1:18-25

Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on patterned paper

The angel holds Joseph as his dream unfolds in quilted vignettes. At the top, Mary gazes ahead, pondering her role in welcoming the Son of God into the world. Below, a squishy baby Jesus peacefully rests as his glory shines on a longing world eager to soak up the light of Emmanuel. Just as a dream holds layers of meaning, this image reflects more than the sum of its parts. I’m fascinated by symbology. Stars have come to represent both Mary and Jesus in liturgical art, so I decided to research stars in quilting. It turns out that quilting holds its own wealth of symbology through choices in color, shapes, patterns, etc.

A star quilt holds significance in a number of different cultures, including the Lakota. Star quilts are given at important moments throughout one’s life, including birth, and the eight-pointed morning star “represents fulfillment, the release from darkness, [and] ushering in a new day.”

This brings me to another fascination of mine, Biblical numerology. One of my most well-worn resources is a glossary of common liturgical symbols in

European Christian art called, *Symbolism in Liturgical Art*. In it, the writers describe that the eight-pointed star is often used in imagery of Christ as an allusion to the eighth day of creation when Christ rose from the dead, “a beginning of days outside of time.” It delights me that this eight-pointed star is made up of triangles with three sides. The number three references the Trinity, and therefore, the communal fullness of the Divine.

In researching imagery for Mary, I realized that both stars and lilies are often used in European art to celebrate Mary’s purity. My glossary reads: “Her bearing of Christ without loss of her virginity is seen as similar to stars sending out their light without loss of brightness.” Of all the things we can lift up about Mary, such as her courage, strength, or steadfast love, why emphasize her virginity? This feels incredibly limiting and dismissive and misses how incredible and multifaceted Mary is. In my image, I want to reclaim the imagery of stars and lilies to represent how Mary is a brilliant, shining example of radical faithfulness in the face of every possible earthly fear. Lilies are resourceful, hearty plants which represent rebirth across cultures. I would argue that Mary is resilient in the face of an impossible task, and in many ways, the entire story of the people of God is reborn through Mary’s bravery. —**Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman**

WORSHIP TEAM

Worship Leader
Tina Bottini

Music Director
Ben April

Elder of the Day
Linda Murphy

Soloist
Kevin Ingalls

Deacon of the Day
Marv Helf

Sound Technician
John Lombardo

Liturgist
Linda Murphy

Video Technician
Addison York

Children’s Message
Sarah Huiest

Welcome Host
Mark and Jessica Kaercher

Coffee Hour Host
Kyrra Howard

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Lo, How a Rose

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The Risen Christ

Words & Music: Keith Getty & Phil Madeira, arr.
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Sing Praises

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The Irish Blessing

Words: Traditional
Music: Benjamin April
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We Adore Thee

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, arr. J.B. Taylor
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ZOOM

To join Sunday Worship via Zoom, use the link below:

<https://tinyurl.com/CRCCZoom>

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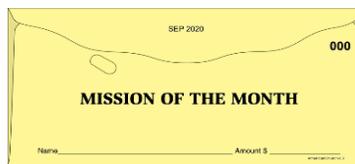
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December Offering Envelopes –





Prayer E-Chain

Please email prayer requests to:

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and

Karen Latta

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