



Hope Is Worth the Risk

December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Eleven O'clock

Rev. Dr. John Cleghorn, Minister

Rev. Dr. Dorothy J. Killian, Interim Associate Minister

Rev. Justin Martin, Minister of Youth & Online Outreach

Smitty Flynn, Volunteer Choir Director

Anne Hunter Eidson, Minister of Music

Manley Roberts, Volunteer Pianist

Rev. Dr. Diane Mowrey, Parish Associate Minister

Service of the Worship of the Lord

(The congregation reads the words in bold-face type except for the headings.)

We Gather in God's Name

Prelude Instrumental Quartet

Processional Caldwell Gospel Choir

Welcoming of Visitors and Announcements Revs. John Cleghorn and Dot Killian

We Prepare Our Hearts and Minds He Came Down Music-making with Children Kids

Call to Worship Rev. Dot Killian

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!

Opening Prayer

*Hymn of Praise 82

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL

Lighting the Advent Candle of Love

Caldwell Youth 2024 Confirmands

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!

We Confess and Remember God's Mercy

Prayer of Confession

Rev. John Cleghorn

Together, we pray aloud before God and each other, saying:

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.

In silence we continue to examine our hearts and minds before God.

We Remind Ourselves We Are Forgiven and Pass the Peace

In the name of Christ, we are forgiven. The peace of Christ be with you.
**In the name of Christ, we receive God's gift of grace. May the peace of
Christ be also with you.**

*We share the peace of Christ with those around us by saying to one another, "The Peace
of Christ be with you," and by responding, "And also with you."*

We Hear God's Word Read and Proclaimed

Prayer for Illumination

Elaine Hultman

First Gospel Lesson

Matthew 1:18-25

NT, p. 1

Second Gospel Lesson

Luke: 1:46-55

NT, p. 53

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Homily

Rev. Justin Martin

Please sing as directed:

**Young Mary did not think to hope for miracles of birth,
and God chose her to be the one to make Christ's home on earth.
So Mary sang her heartfelt praise of God who sets things straight;
the mighty fall, the weak are raised, the hungry fill their plate.**



**Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**



**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**



**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."**



**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**



**We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**



**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

We Respond to the Word in Various Ways

We Reflect On God's Word

Rev. John Cleghorn

*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."

Offertory

Caldwell Gospel Choir and Congregation

As directed, all are invited to sing: **1. "Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices."
2. "Christ is the Lord, O praise His name forever."**

*Contributions to our regular offering can be placed in offering plates. Other options for giving:
go to www.caldwellpresby.org/giving, use the QR code on page 7, or mail a check to the
church office at 1609 East Fifth Street, 28204.*

*Doxology

VENI EMMANUEL

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all creatures here
below; Praise Holy Spirit evermore; Praise Triune God, whom we adore.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

*Prayer of Dedication

Rev. John Cleghorn

We Pray for the People *(concluding with the Lord's Prayer)*

Rev. Dot Killian

*Hymn 136

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

African American Spiritual

Contributions to our Reparations Offering can be placed on the communion table as we sing.

*Charge and Benediction

Rev. Justin Martin

*Everyone is invited to Hope Hall for refreshments and community following worship or
meet in the choir area of the sanctuary to go caroling.*

Announcements

Thank you for silencing electronics before worship begins.

Please sign and pass the Friendship Pad up and down your row or go to the online registry at caldwellpresby.org/hi. If you are interested in joining or learning more about Caldwell, see John or Gail or go to www.caldwellpresby.org/join.

We humbly acknowledge the Catawba, Sugaree and Waxhaw Indigenous peoples, who were dispossessed of the land on which we live and worship. We also acknowledge that the funds left to this church in 1922 to build our sanctuary were stained by the sin of slavery. We strive continuously for God's mercy and correction.

Thanks to today's guest musicians who spread joy in our worship: Dante Fowler, trumpet; Greg Jarrell, sax; Jolanta Wilson, trombone; Tyrone Jefferson, trombone. Thanks also to Ann Dorsett who made the brass quartet possible in memory of her parents, Joe and Betty Jo, and her brother Jody.

Caroling is a wonderful way to give and receive Christmas spirit today! All are invited to go caroling (indoors) following worship at the Memory Care community where Joan Kilpatrick works. Please meet up in the sanctuary choir area following worship for directions and carpooling. All singing abilities are welcome.

See the insert for those who have generously provided poinsettias this year in honor or memory of loved ones. Those who purchased poinsettias can take them home after the Christmas Eve service.

Music Reparations Offering: Today, we will collect our monthly offering to honor the anonymous, enslaved writers of African American spirituals, music that is central to our worship. No payment or royalties were ever offered to these composers or their descendants, so we seek to "pay it forward" by identifying recipients in our community to receive this offering who provide musical opportunities to Black young people.

The back page of this bulletin offers the artist's reflections on today's bulletin cover art, "Joseph's Dream."

Our Christmas Eve Service of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight will begin at 5:00 pm on December 24 in the sanctuary.

Are You Caught Up? With the deepest gratitude for all who have supported Caldwell financially through 2024, please take a moment to consider your status on fulfilling your pledge for 2024. Feel free to check with Business Manager Tracey Tolbert on your account status anytime between December 26 and 31. She is at ttolbert@caldwellpresby.org. And ... THANK YOU!

Caldwell will host Room in the Inn on December 28 (and once a month through

March) for 8 women who are currently experiencing homelessness. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks. Please check out the Sign-Up Genius link in our weekly email communications to sign up. Email Nancy Pugh at npugh422@gmail.com with questions.

Save the Date and Plan to March with Caldwell in the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. parade on Saturday, January 18.

Please be aware that our worship services are streamed live, recorded, and available on YouTube. They can be found by going to the Caldwell Presbyterian Church channel.

If you would like to receive our online communications (usually two per week), email Justin at jmartin@caldwellpresby.org to sign up.

Planning on dropping by the church? Be sure to call before coming because there may not always be someone to let you in. Staff contact information is on the back page.

Today's Liturgy was written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Please refrain from digitally sharing their copyrighted work.

A note about language: At Caldwell, we do our best to create an inclusive, welcoming and safe environment for all of God's children, however they identify. We aspire to use non-binary language in worship and church communications in reference to one another or people in general, knowing that we won't always get it right. We invite others to take up this journey, embracing anew what we say, "God Invites. We Welcome. All."

The Church Office will be closed December 24 - 28.

Things to Know About Today's Gathering

Masking indoors is welcomed. The East transept located near the doors to the handicap ramp remains designated for increased social distancing and requires masking.

Physical interaction indicators – Pick up a nametag in the narthex and indicate your level of comfort with physical closeness with a self-adhesive dot.

Restrooms – There is a restroom in the narthex/main sanctuary entrance. Ushers are available to direct you to the other restrooms.

The Nursery, for children under 3, can be found by going through the door to the right of the pulpit, take an immediate right, and going down the hallway. Ushers are also able to direct you.

For Late Arrivals – Please come to the ramp door and ring the doorbell. An usher will let you in.

The QR code for giving:



Joseph's Dream by Lauren Wright Pittman

(larger image on front cover) 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, according to Kevin Locke, Lakota Sioux, "represents fulfillment, the release from darkness, [and] ushering in a new day."

In researching imagery for Mary, I realized that both stars and lilies are often used in European art to celebrate Mary's purity. One of my most well-worn resources is a glossary of common liturgical symbols in European Christian art called, *Symbolism in Liturgical Art*. It 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

Staff Contact Information

Rev. John Cleghorn (704-957-4511; jcleghorn@caldwellpresby.org)

Rev. Dot Killian (803-230-2530; dkillian@caldwellpresby.org)

Anne Hunter Eidson (704-622-9975; ahuntereidson@caldwellpresby.org)

Rev. Justin Martin (704-305-1053; jmartin@caldwellpresby.org)

Tracey Tolbert (704-605-9669; ttolbert@caldwellpresby.org)

Peggy Blaine (704-576-8449; pblaine@caldwellpresby.org)

Mike Jones(mjones@caldwellpresby.org)