

# Durham Mennonite Church

December 29, 2024



**Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church**

# **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

**God of mystery and might, we praise and worship you, for you came in silence, while all lay sleeping, to enter our world as a child of humble birth. We thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, born of your handmaid Mary. In his face we behold your glory, for in his life as in his death is your gift of salvation. By your Spirit, may our hearts be filled with thanksgiving, that we may live and give as we have received. Let our whole lives be gifts of praise to you, God of love and peace, in the gracious name of Jesus Christ, your Son, by the power of your Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.**

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND THE CHRIST CANDLE

Today we welcome the Christ Child, the fulfillment of our joy, as we proclaim with the prophet Isaiah:

**“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).**

Christ our joy has come near!

Emmanuel, God with us, has come to dwell with us as a tiny baby.

**“His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish**

**and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” (Isaiah 9:7).**

We light this candle as a sign of Christ coming as an infant, to dwell with us and live in vulnerable humanity here on earth. May the light of Christ warm our hearts and light our way as we share the joy of God’s salvation wherever we go.

**So teach us to count our days  
that we may gain a wise heart.**

Do not forget that with the Lord,  
one day is like a thousand years,  
and a thousand years are like one day.

**Teach us, O Lord, how to lead lives of  
holiness and godliness while, in  
accordance with your promise, we wait for**

**new heavens and a new earth, where  
righteousness is at home.**

**This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Lift up your hearts.**

**We lift them up to the Lord!**

## **HYMN - VT #47 GOD OF OUR STRENGTH**

**1 God of our strength, enthroned above,  
the source of life, the fount of love,  
O let devotion's sacred flame  
our souls awake to praise thy name.  
God of our strength, we wait on thee,  
our sure defense forever be.**

**2 To thee we lift our joyful eyes,  
to thee on wings of faith we rise.  
Come thou, and let thy courts on earth  
ring out thy praise in days of mirth.  
God of our strength, we wait on thee,  
our sure defense forever be.**

**3 God of our strength, from day to day  
direct our thoughts and guide our way.  
Oh, may our hearts united be  
in sweet communion, God, with thee.  
God of our strength, we wait on thee,  
our sure defense forever be.**

**4 God of our strength, on thee we call.  
God of our hope, our light, our all,  
thy name we praise, thy love adore,  
our rock, our shield, forevermore.  
God of our strength, we wait on thee,  
our sure defense forever be.**

**HYMN - VT #592 HOW FIRM A  
FOUNDATION**

**How firm a foundation, you saints of the**

**Lord,**

**Is laid for your faith in his excellent**

**word!**

**What more can he say than to you he**

**has said,**

**to you who for refuge to Jesus have  
fled?**

**Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not  
dismayed,**

**For I am thy God and will still give thee  
aid.**

**I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause  
you to stand,**

**Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent  
hand.**



**When through the deep waters I call you  
to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,  
For I will be with you, your troubles to  
bless,  
And sanctify to you, the deepest  
distress.**

**When through fiery trials your pathway  
shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be your  
supply.  
The flames shall not hurt you; I only**

**design**

**Your dross to consume, and your gold to  
refine.**

**The soul that on Jesus still leans for  
repose**

**I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;**

**That soul, though all hell should  
endeavor to shake,**

**I'll never, no never, no never forsake!**

## **HYMN - VT #759 TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE**

**Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee,  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.**

**Take my intellect and use,  
Ev'ry power as thou shalt choose.  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee,  
Filled with messages from Thee.**

**Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my will and make it Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine,  
It shall be no longer mine.**

**Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee,  
Ever, only, all for Thee.**

## **Confession of Sin**

Holy and merciful God, we confess we neglect to seek your wisdom for our lives. Instead, we think more highly of ourselves and our own knowledge, choosing to go our own way in this world.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We let the cares and concerns of this world crowd out the promise of your Word, that you are with us always.

**Christ, have mercy.**

We confess we face the future with uncertainty and misgivings. Help us put our trust in you so we may live faithful and obedient lives, as we depend on the wisdom of your Holy Spirit and the love of Christ to shape our lives and actions.

**Lord, have mercy. Amen.**

## **ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

**The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them. Friends, hear and believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen.**

## **HYMN - VT #419 GREAT IS OUR FAITHFULNESS**

**Great is thy faithfulness, O God my  
Father.**

**There is no shadow of turning with  
thee.**

**Thou changest not, thy compassions,  
they fail not.**

**As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.**

**Great is thy faithfulness!**

**Great is thy faithfulness!**

**Morning by morning new mercies I see.**

**All I have needed thy hand hath  
provided.**

**Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

**Summer and winter,**

**and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon, and stars in their courses  
above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and  
love.**

**Great is thy faithfulness!  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed thy hand hath  
provided.  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that  
endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to  
guide,**



**strength for today and bright hope for  
tomorrow;  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand  
beside!**

**Great is thy faithfulness!  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed thy hand hath  
provided.  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

## **SCRIPTURE - PSALM 23:1-6**

**The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.**

## **SCRIPTURE - MATTHEW 11:25-30**

**At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

## **SCRIPTURE - PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7**

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

## **SCRIPTURE - 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10**

### **Paul's Visions and Revelations**

**7** even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. **8** Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, **9** but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. **10** Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

## **Sermon - Jonathan Robie**

**“Emmanuel, God is With Us”**

## **Congregational Response**

**Sharing Praises and Prayer Concerns**

## **Prayers of God’s People**

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name;  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in  
heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the  
glory are yours, now and  
forever. Amen.**

## **HYMN - VT #240 JOY TO THE WORLD**

**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**

**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.**

**No more let sin and sorrows 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.**



**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, 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**

## **SENDING (from Psalm 148)**

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!

**Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his hosts!**

Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and maidens together,  
old men and children!

**Let us all praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his majesty is above earth and  
heaven.**

Now and forever and always. Amen!