



Pennington Presbyterian Church

Service for the Lord's Day
First Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, December 27, 2020

Forty-second Sunday of COVID-19 pandemic

"Those who dream will not keep silent."



Pennington
Presbyterian
FAITH • SERVICE • COMMUNITY

WELCOME

Rev. Nancy Mikoski

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Today is the first Sunday after Christmas. We are continuing through this season with the theme "Those Who Dream" with materials, art, and liturgy from A Sanctified Art, LLC. Today our focus is "Those who dream will not keep silent."

Thank you to Amy Pszczolkowski for being our Zoom host and operator today and next Sunday! We are so grateful for her gift of this time and skill so that we can worship God together via Zoom.

Our liturgists this morning are Larry Mansier, Christine James, and Lee White.

Let us begin by singing Angels We Have Heard on High, which is #113 in the Glory to God hymnal.

CAROL

Angels We Have Heard on High

Glory to God #113

CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING CANDLES

Larry Mansier

Liturgist invites people to light a candle if they have one close at hand.

Here on the heels of Christmas

We speak of love.

We speak of joy.

We speak of candle light and fireside.

We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

We speak of "glorias" and angel choruses.

We speak the words, "Do not be afraid."

Here on the heels of Christmas, we are called to speak, for the world needs a light.

One light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Let us worship and listen. Then let us speak.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION and WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Dr. Christine James

Friends, I invite you into a time of confession by first hearing this story by pastor and writer Sarah Are.

“When I was in seventh grade, my youth pastor asked the group the question, ‘Where have you seen God today?’ Thinking this must be a trick question, I began mentally racing through my day, trying to imagine what he could possibly mean. Where had I seen God today? We had spent the day on a hiking trail! All I had seen were people and nature. As my panic settled into my gut and I was unable to answer the question, one of my peers began speaking. She spoke of the beauty of the sunrise and how the gift of another day felt holy. Then another friend spoke of the little girl we passed on the trail who had given her a small wildflower-- an act of random kindness to a complete stranger. Another peer mentioned David who had helped pick Josh up when he slipped in the mud, showing only genuine concern. And on and on they went, until I began to see that God was everywhere, and it was not enough to keep it inside. Seeing God in your midst is one thing. Speaking it out loud for all to hear, that’s entirely different. The world needs this good news. We are not called to be silent. So family of faith, please repeat after me our prayer of confession.”

We will do this with our mics muted.

God of today and tomorrow,
We know that your fingerprints are all over this world.
And we know that those who dream cannot keep silent.
So today we pray,
Give us eyes to see you.
Give us courage to trust you.
And give us lips to speak of you in our midst.
Gratefully we pray.
Amen.

Christine offers Words of Assurance.

SCRIPTURE READING

Lee White

Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the

child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Nancy Mikoski

Young friends, it is time for Time with Children. The Bible story that Mrs. White read for us is about Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus going to the temple. There they meet some new friends named Simeon and Anna. Simeon and Anna are older than they are. We don’t know their exact age, but they were friends who were older.

One of the best things about our church is that we have people of all different ages. We have some who are young like you. We have teenagers. We have young adults. We have adults who are a bit older, and we have people who are the age of grandparents or grandparents. Some of you are lucky that your actual grandparents are part of our church. That’s pretty great. But even if your grandparents don’t go to our church or live in a different town, we can still have older friends at church, like Simeon and Anna.

After church today, I hope you will talk with your parents about some of your friends at church who aren’t your age. Maybe they help you sing. Or maybe they are a teacher. Or maybe they are on our staff like Casey or Megan or me. Maybe they sit in a pew near where you like to sit. Maybe they help out in child care. Or maybe you used to talk with them while you had snacks after worship or played a

game while your parents were talking to their friends. Think of some of your older friends, and if you want, video a message for them or make them a card. Then, your mom or dad can send it to them.

I'm so thankful that you are my friends. I hope we all have lots of church friends, of lots of different ages.

REFLECTION IN SMALL GROUPS

Nancy Mikoski

Amy assigns people (random assignment is fine) to breakout rooms, with 4-5 people/families per room.

1. Who do you relate to most in this story? Simeon, Anna, Mary, Joseph, or baby Jesus. Why?
2. Simeon felt moved by the Spirit to say or do something. Have you ever felt led by God to say or do something? What was it?
3. What is your personal take away from this story? What are you feeling encouraged to do or think or feel?

Congregants remain in breakout rooms for 15 minutes, with a 1 minute countdown.

BE THE CHURCH

Nancy Mikoski

Think of the Simeons and Annas in your life. Send a text, e-mail, or card to, or phone, that person. Write their names down now.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Christine James

Reflective Prayer

The congregation is invited to type their responses into the chat.

1. Anna and Simeon begin speaking by praising God. Type in the chat box something you are grateful for, something that is good news and worthy of praise, using just one or two words. If you have more than one thing, type in one and send and then type in a second and send.

Amy turns these into a word cloud. Christine reads a few words aloud.

2. Anna and Simeon have dreams for a better world. Write a dream you have for the world that we need to speak about. Type it in the chat box using one or two words.

Amy turns these into a word cloud. Christine reads a few words aloud.

3. Anna and Simeon speak and are heard, but not all people are listened to with the same equality in our world. Think of one person or a group of people that are speaking, but are not being heard. Type in the chat box using one or two words.

Amy turns these into a word cloud. Christine reads a few words aloud, then proceeds:

May this be a reminder that we can use our voices for and alongside others.

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

Christine James

Christine asks for people to share a joy or concern, unmuting then muting again.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Christine James

Holy God, we lift up these prayers of praise and gratitude to you.

Christine names the joys that were mentioned.

We lift up, also, our dreams that shouldn't be kept silent. And now we lift up prayers for those whose voices are silenced or muted. We pray also for those who are having a hard time, for the sick and all who need your healing, for those who are grieving.

Christine prays for the people whose names and/or situations were offered during the joys and concerns.

Holy God, we lift all these prayers to you, written and unwritten, spoken and unspoken. Hold them with care. Give them life. Breathe your grace into them and make all things new. In the name of Jesus who taught us to pray.

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

OFFERING

Nancy Mikoski

Jesus is the greatest gift God has ever given us! We rejoice in him. We respond with love and by following as his disciples. That includes our daily living and the decisions we make about our time, talents, and money.

During this time, we continue to have two options for giving our offerings. You may mail a check to the church or you may go to our website and click the link to Donate Now. The process is simple, safe, and fast. Thank you for continuing to give financially, for sharing your time and talents, for praying, and for living your faith at work, school, and home.

HYMN

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Glory to God #136

BENEDICTION

Rev. Nancy Mikoski

Guest Musicians

The track for *Go Tell It on the Mountain* was graciously offered to us today by friends of our music ministry, recorded on December 20, 2020 by our director of music ministries, Megan Coiley.

Dr. Andrew Kotylo, *organ*

Marisa Curcio, *soprano*

Karen Richter, *mezzo-soprano*

Aaron Hoke, *baritone*

Kevin Schneider, *tenor*

Those Who Dream

Graphic Design by Lauren Wright Pittman | Original photography by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | Designs by Hannah Garrity |
Guide developed by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | Commentary by guest contributor, Dr. Marcia Y. Riggs | Liturgy by Sarah Are |
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