

***Response: “Shalom”**

**Sha rom, sha rom, mata a u hi ma de. Sha rom, sha rom,
Kami no mi megumi.**

(Peace, peace, until we meet again. Peace, peace, may we be blessed with grace from God.)

**Sha rom, sha rom, mata a u hi ma de. Sha rom, sha rom,
yuta kani, yuta kani, yuta kani.**

(Peace, peace, until we meet again. Peace, peace, abundantly, abundantly, abundantly.)

Postlude

Haruko Sakakibara

“Alleluia!” Christmas Oratorio by C. St. Sarens,

Arr. By Jean Pasquet

We invite you to remain seated during the Postlude as we enjoy the music and God’s presence together. If you need to go, please feel free to do so. Go with God’s blessings.

In Appreciation:

Greeters: Sue Goodwin, Donna Komure-Toyama

Ushers: Julie Chew, Terri Bowman

Parking: Carl Odell

Parking Barriers (Sat): Neil Matsuoka

Sound System: Jonathan Sakakibara

Zoom Moderator/Greeter: Judy Yee

Altar Flowers: Victor & Sherri Yee,

in loving memory of their parents



The Celebration of Worship

December 3, 2023 • 1st Sunday of Advent

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

Worship Leader: Christine Umeda

Pianist: Haruko Sakakibara

Japanese Reader: Haruko Sakakibara

Communion Elders: Gary Younglove, Phillip Chew

Advent Candle Lighter: Christine Umeda

YES (Youth Education Session): Lynn Yamamoto

Prelude Haruko Sakakibara

“In Dulei Jubilo”

Traditional Latin Carol, Arr. by Mary McDonald

***Introit**

All: Make us one, Lord, make us one. Holy Spirit make us one. Let Your love flow so the world will know, we are one in You.

Advent Candle Lighting

Reader: Today is the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Advent means “coming; and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, people of faith turn to symbols such as candles, evergreens, and wreaths to proclaim our belief in the unquenchable light of God shining in Jesus.

** Those who can, please stand*

This morning we light the first candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of Hope. (Light the first candle now.) Hope is like light shining in a dark place. With the lighting of this candle, we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ as we pray for His peace and love to fill our world. Let's pray:

Reader: Dear God, We continue to hope in Your promise that Christ will come again to fill our lives and all the world with love, joy and peace.

All: Thank you, God, for the light of hope. As we prepare for Christ's coming this holy season, help us share your hope with others. Amen.

Call to Worship

Christine Umeda

Leader: People of Advent, lift up your hopes. In all seasons of life, God draws near to us, God is always with us.

People: In this season of watching and waiting, Jesus reminds us that Bethlehem is the beginning of our spiritual journey with God, not the end of our journey.

All: In this season of Advent anticipation and hope, may God's Spirit open our hearts to the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

*Opening Hymn: Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (#8)

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates, behold the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me Thy inner presence feel; Thy grace and love in me reveal.

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

All: Our Parent 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.

*Sending Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem (#44)

O 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.

For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love him and for those who want to love him more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is the Lord who invites you. It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

- from the Iona Community

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Receiving the Elements

Opportunity To Present Offerings

All: Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One. Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, God's Son. (Repeat) And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich" because of what the Lord has done for us. (Repeat) Give thanks. Give thanks.

*Doxology

All: Praise God from Whom all blessings flow; praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

Christine Umeda

Joys & Concerns

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

Invitation to Confession

Christine Umeda

Leader: When we pause to reflect on our lives, we find a lot that doesn't measure up to God's good intentions for us. The holy season, the circular Advent wreath with no beginning and no end, reminds us of God's endless mercy toward us. Let's admit the places we need God's healing and wholeness as we ask God for forgiveness.

Prayer of Confession

Christine Umeda

Leader: Holy God of Advent, in these days when our hearts are weighed down with stress and fear and despair, come to us. In this season when our minds are filled with worry, not wonder, come to us.

People: God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ You came to us as light shining in the darkness. We confess that we don't always welcome Your light, sometimes we turn aside to go our own way. We live arrogantly and in denial, as if we have no need of grace. Forgive us.

All: God, we have disappointed Your hopes and harmed others by our words and actions. Renew us, so that we may be awake and alert, watching for the glorious return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Time for silent reflection and confession to God

Assurance of God's Grace

Christine Umeda

Leader: God has promised that the day of salvation is near. As we are faithful in prayer and in offering kindness and doing justice, God's Spirit of peace and hope will fill and sustain us.

All: We believe the good news of the Gospel. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Amen.

*Response to God's Forgiveness: Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me (#582 GtG)

All Sing: Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace**

Christine Umeda

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Choir Song

“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

Children’s Message

Sue Goodwin

Children and youth may now leave for YES.

***Hymn of Reflection: Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (#2)**

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.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by Thine all sufficient merit raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Unison Prayer of Guidance

All: Now may the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts, the interpretation of our minds, and the response of our hands be acceptable to You, our Lord and our Redeemer. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Japanese Reading: Romans 12:11-12

Haruko Sakakibara

Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant and hopeful. Don’t quit in hard times; pray all the harder.

1st Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:3-4

Christine Umeda

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

Advent # 1 - God’s Landscaping

Luke 3:1-14

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod, ruler of Galilee; during the Chief-Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—John, Zachariah’s son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet.

When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the popular thing to do, John exploded: “Brood of snakes! What do you think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to deflect God’s judgment? It’s your life that must change, not your skin. And don’t think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as ‘father.’ Being a child of Abraham is neither here nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make children from stones if he wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and flourishing? Because if it’s deadwood, it goes on the fire.” The crowd asked him, “Then what are we supposed to do?” “If you have two coats, give one away,” he said. “Do the same with your food.” Tax men also came to be baptized and said, “Teacher, what should we do?” He told them, “No more extortion—collect only what is required by law.” Soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He told them, “No harassment, no blackmail—and be content with your rations.”

Musical Interlude

Haruko Sakakibara

“Larghetto Pastorale in F” by J.S. Bach, Arr. by Jean Pasquet