



CHRIST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
MILFORD

December 13, 2020
3rd Sunday of Advent

REFLECTION

Celebrating The Three Comings of Christ: His “Second” Coming: In the Soul

O blessed Well of Love! O Flower of Grace!
O glorious Morning-Star! O Lamp of Light!
Most lively image of thy Father’s face,
Eternal King of Glory, Lord of Might,
Meek Lamb of God, before all worlds behight,
How can we Thee requite for all this good?
Or what can prize that Thy most precious blood?

Yet nought Thou ask’st in lieu of all this love,
But love of us, for guerdon of thy pain:
Ay me! what can us less than that behave?
Had He required life for us again,
Had it been wrong to ask His own with gain?
He gave us life, He it restored lost;
Then life were least, that us so little cost.

– “An Hymne of Heavenly Love,” Edmund Spenser

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

Gathering Hymn Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Call to Worship John 14:18–19, 23:

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live...

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” Alleluia!

1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates! Be - hold, the
 2. A help - er just he comes to thee, his char - iot
 3. O blest the land, the cit - y blest, where Christ the
 4. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a

King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
 is hu - mil - i - ty, his king - ly crown is
 Rul - er is con - fessed! O hap - py hearts and
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for

draw - ing near, the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 ho - li - ness, his scep - ter, pi - ty in dis - tress.
 hap - py homes to whom this King in tri - umph comes!
 heav'n's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.

5. 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.

6. So come, my Sovereign, enter in!
 Let new and nobler life begin!
 Thy Holy Spirit, guide us on,
 until the glorious crown be won.

Invocation

Old Testament Lesson Isaiah 7:14; 40:9–11

Praise Hymn In the Bleak Midwinter

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Confession of Sin W.F. May in *A Catalogue of Sins* (see closing reflection)

Individual Confession

Absolution Isaiah 40:10–11a

Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom.

Thanksgiving Hymn What child is this, who laid to rest (over)

New Testament Lesson Luke 1:26–38

Peace of Christ

The peace of the Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Sanctus

with vigor

fff Ho - ly! Ho - ly! Ho - ly! Lord, God of Hosts! Hea-ven and earth are
full of Your glo-ry! Ho - san-na in the High - est! Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the High - est.

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking 'with vigor'. The melody starts on G4 and moves stepwise up to D5, with a trill on the final D5. The second staff continues the melody, with lyrics underneath. It features a 'fff' dynamic marking and a trill on the final D5. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line.

1 In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan;
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;
 3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there;
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim thronged the air;
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 but his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part;

‡ in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.
 ‡ wor - shipped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
 yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
 2. Why lies he in such mean es - tate, where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3. So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him;

Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by:

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y.
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y.
 joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y.

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Sermon Text Isaiah 10:1-26

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Sermon The Book of Emmanuel, 3 | Curran Bishop

Response Hymn Joy to the World! The Lord is Come

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Bringing Our Life to God Prayers | Collection | Profession

Prayers of the People

Collection text **MNA 1708** to **76959** and follow the prompts
or visit give.pcamna.org/to/1708/

Confession of Faith The Nicene Creed (AD 325)

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;

he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried.

The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead.

His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the
Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

He spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic
church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the
resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.

(*that is, Jesus' Church in all time and place)

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re - ceive her
 2. Joy to the earth! The Sav - ior reigns: let men their songs em -
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions

King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heav'n and na - ture sing.

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Communion in Christ Jesus

All Christians are invited to join us to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. During this time of social distancing we offer for our pastor to come and bless your partaking of elements you provide to preserve the corporate-presence of Christ pictured in the supper as best we can. If you've been part of our streaming service please text Curran (203-812-9928) to set up a time he can meet you (from a distance) to celebrate communion.

O Savior Rend the Heavens Wide



1 O Sav - ior, rend the heav - ens wide; Come down, come
down with might - y stride. Un - bar the gates, the doors break
down; Un - bar the way to heav - en's crown.

Prayer for those searching

Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.

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Coronation Hymn

Once in Royal David's City

Benediction

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
 2. He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
 3. And through all his won - drous child - hood he would hon - or and o - bey,
 4. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
 5. Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,

where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
 and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall:
 • love and watch the low - ly maid - en in whose gen - tle arms he lay:
 for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove,
 we shall see him, but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;

Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 with the poor, and mean, and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 • Chris - tian chil - dren all must be mild, o - be - dient, good as he.
 and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
 when like stars his chil - dren crowned all in white shall wait a - round.

REFLECTION

Advent Desire

There are two “Great Comings” of Christ, his coming 2000 + years ago as the Lamb of God to deal with sin, and his coming at the end of history as the Lion of Judah to vindicate his people as Judge of the world. But between those two Comings, Christ “comes” again and again—to all who turn to him. He comes now, not in the flesh but in the power of the Holy Spirit. He comes to forgive our faults and cover us with his righteousness; he comes to comfort us and heal our wounds; he comes to confront us and work his own goodness into us in those areas where we have not been in pursuit of the “right living” he calls us to as citizens of the kingdom he established in his first coming.

Below is a meditation on the sin of sloth, one of the so-called “seven deadly sins.” It poses a good question during Advent: What good is the “second coming” of Christ to us “in the soul,” if we are not looking for it, not desiring very much of what he has to give us in the here and now? So examine yourself this week; but take heart, too—it is possible to stir up desire for God if we choose to do it, asking God even to empower our choice, since, mysteriously it is he who enables us to turn to him in the first place.

—Ron Lutjens

According to the Fathers of the Church, sloth is not laziness so much as “acedia”—dejection or melancholy, the sorrow in the Divine Good. Such a man has his son, but his son bores him. He possesses his beloved, but he finds her incapable of stirring his interest. Apathy would be a better term to describe this profound dejection. The soul in this state is beyond mere sadness and melancholy. It has removed itself from the rise and fall of feeling; the very root of its feelings in desire is dead. To be human is to desire. The good man desires God and other things in God. The sinful man desires things in the place of God, but he is still recognizably human, inasmuch as he knows desire. The slothful man, however, is a dead man, an arid waste. His desire itself has dried up. Perhaps boredom is the best modern term to characterize this deadness of soul. In boredom before God it is man who has failed his object, not the reverse. Although the modern sophisticate feels no need to apologize for being bored—since he thinks his boredom is caused by the poverty of his object—the man of faith must confess his boredom as his sin because his attitude reflects the poverty of his own soul. To be unmoved and untouched in the presence of God exposes an interior inadequacy.

—W.F. May in *A Catalogue of Sins*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Group will meet tonight, December 13, 4-5:30pm. Since the cold means we'll need to meet indoors we will meet in several smaller groups to protect each other. Please RSVP to info@cpcmilford.org and we'll let the sorting hat script assign us between houses to enjoy (socially distanced) time together.

'Twas the Night with Christ Pres Fairfield: Sunday, December 13, 8pm. A celebration of advent in music and art: [Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 833 0277 5386

Thursday Night Prayer Meeting – 7-7:50pm

In the midst of pandemic, political chaos and social distancing we need each other, and we need God. Please join us as we follow a short prayer and scripture liturgy, pray for each other, and have some “digital fellowship.”

[Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 856 4475 2681 Passcode: 665297

Christmas Eve Service Thursday, December 24, 6-7pm at the MAC (40 Railroad Ave, Milford, CT). [Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 844 3944 3883 Passcode: 995837

Contact us

203.812.9928 or info@cpcmilford.org; find us on Facebook at facebook.com/CPCMilford or visit us online at cpcmilford.org

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